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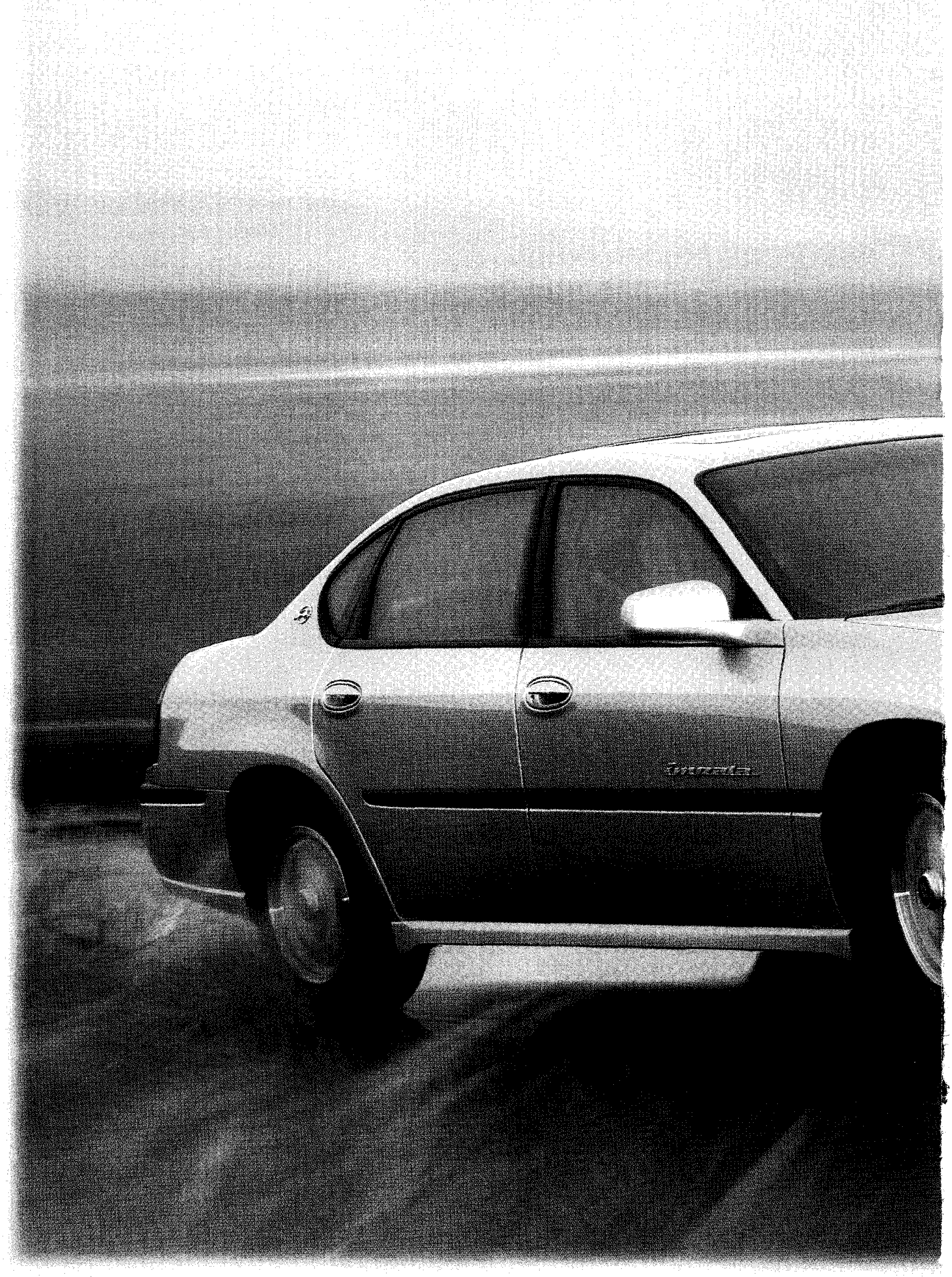

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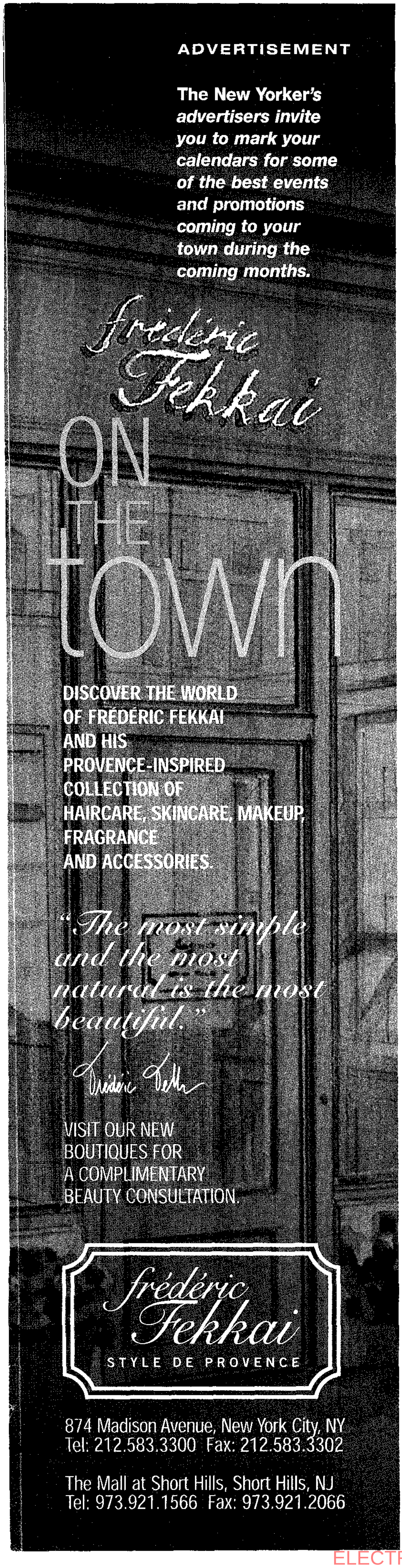
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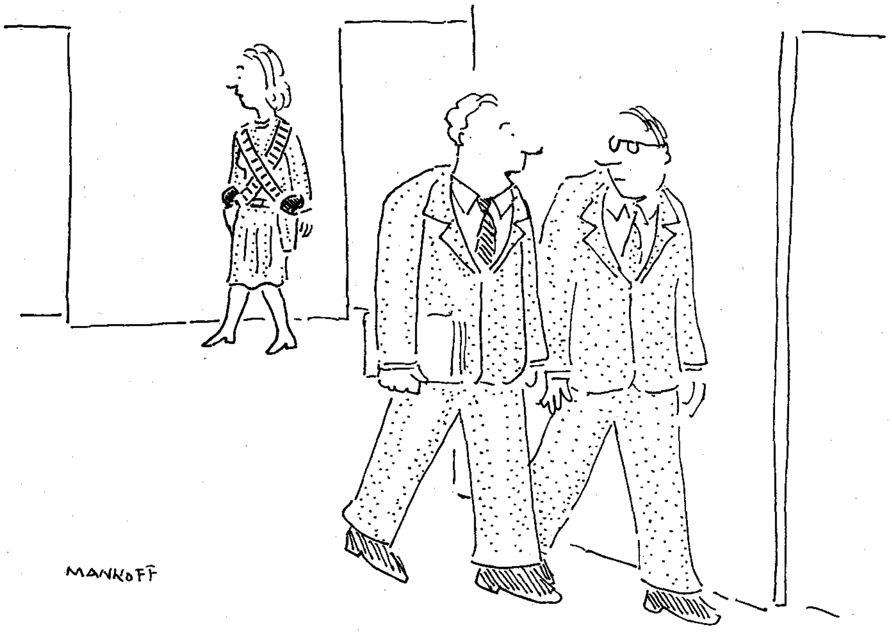

"You know, if she weren't part of a well-regulated militia I'd be a little nervous."

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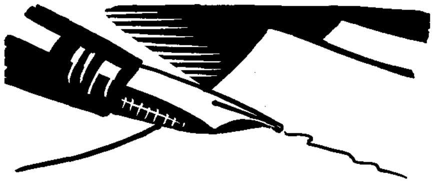

GUN BATTLES

So now a California resident will be limited to one gun purchase a month (reported in "Big Guns," by Peter J. Boyer, May 17th). Will the next dozen slain high-school students inspire legislators to make it one gun every two months? At that rate, a mere hundred and forty-four victims will limit gun buyers to one a year! It is no surprise that this country is the laughingstock of the rest of the world when it comes to lethal weapons. It is high time we grew up, abandoned our Wild West mentality, restricted cinematic violence, and joined modern civilization, in which guns are strictly limited to the armed forces, the police, and professional guards—except, of course, for Charlton Heston.

Uriel Goldberg
West Hills, Calif.

To market gun control as a public-health issue, as is described in "Big Guns," is inappropriate, irrational, and malicious. The product-liability attorneys of the Castano Group are seeking to present the public as gullible victims incapable of having any will power or common sense. The real disease here is the greed of attorneys and the credulity of the media. The ambulance chasers are after the gun manufacturers this time. What will be next—alcohol, automobiles, or Microsoft?

David Brown
Fairfax, Calif.

COURT BATTLES

Elizabeth Kolbert's Profile of Norman Siegel, of the New York Civil Liberties Union ("Stormin' Norman," May 10th), characterizes the activities of the American Civil Liberties Union as "work [that] strains against common decency, or, at least, common sense." Kolbert doesn't add that the societal definitions of "common decency" and "common sense" depend on time, on place, and on who claims to speak for these standards, or that one of the roles of our Constitution is to protect the rights of those who cannot or will not conform to the mainstream definitions. Then Kolbert seems to chide Siegel for his belief that in some sense the presence of the Hebrew Israelites in Times Square, the accountability of the police, and citizen testimony at City Council meetings are all connected. But it is obvious that they are: all three are about protecting the rights of citizens and the instruments by which society does so.

Ellen Zweibel
Boulder, Colo.

Ms. Kolbert discusses the amount of press attention that Norman Siegel gets. But perhaps there is a general misunderstanding as to what civil liberties are all about, and perhaps that is the reason that Siegel must constantly take his arguments to the press. Chipping away at any one group's civil liberties may erode others', and if Siegel is successful in communicating that point, that's already a job well done.

Tim Horn
New York City

MAX'S LESSON

The saddest note in Lucinda Franks's moving story of her nephew Max, who was born with severe birth defects ("Miracle Kid," May 17th), was the callous responses that some of the health-care providers gave to Max's family. The ancient injunction "First, do no harm" should apply in the realms of psychology and emotion as well as in the realm of physiology. Seldom does a week elapse without our being awed by a new advance in medicine or human genetic research. Regrettably, it appears that our compassion has developed in inverse proportion to our technology.

Tom Norton
Camarillo, Calif.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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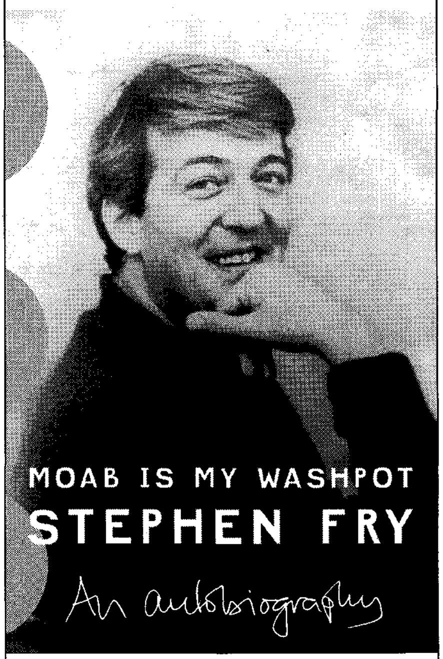

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Angelique—Lisa Gay Hamilton leads the cast in a drama by first-time playwright Lorena Gale, about an African slave in Montreal in the seventeen-thirties. In previews. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

The Gathering—Theodore Bikel stars in a new play by Arje Shaw, about three generations of a family living in New York during the Reagan years. Two previews on June 9. Opens June 10 at 8. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Gemini—A Second Stage revival of Albert Innaurato's 1976 comedy. In previews. (307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

Gertrude & Alice: A Likeness to Loving—Lola Pashalinski and Linda Chapman portray Stein and Toklas, in a play they co-wrote. Opens June 9 at 8. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Hamlet—East Coast Artists' version of Shakespeare's play, directed by Richard Schechner. Preview on June 9. Opens June 10 at 7:30. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651.)

If Love Were All—Twiggy and Harry Groener portray Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward, in a musical comedy adapted from Coward's works. Two previews on June 9. Opens June 10 at 8. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Wild Nights with Emily—Madeleine Olnek's comedy is a satire of the spinster stereotype, in which Emily Dickinson (Deb Margolin) is involved in a love affair with her sister-in-law. The show is followed by Olnek's one-act "Gay! Gay! Gay!" Opens June 10 at 8 and runs, Thursdays through Saturdays, through June 26. (Wow Café, 59 E. 4th St. 777-4280.)

Wonderland—A comedy-drama by Julia Dahl, set in Sag Harbor, about a group of politically minded members of Generation X. In previews through June 13. Opens June 14 at 8. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Amy's View—Dame Judi Dench is an amazing actress, but can she keep you in your seat for the duration of another one of David Hare's pompous plays? (Just barely.) This one claims to be about the tangled relationship between an actress from theatre's golden age and her modern daughter, who marries an arbiter of pop culture, but it's really about Hare's out-of-touch ideas regarding how today's audiences view theatre—meaning him. Directed by Richard Eyre. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

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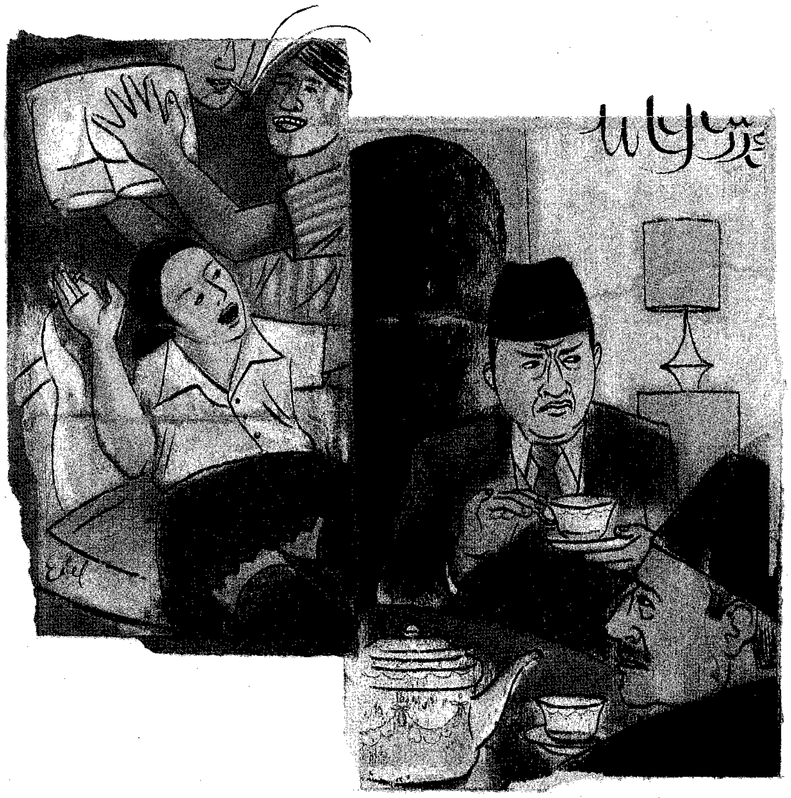
Annie Get Your Gun—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Beautiful Thing—Jonathan Harvey's 1993 drama, set in London, about two working-class boys who fall in love. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200. Closes June 27.)

The Civil War—The musical. Frank Wildhorn wrote the music and book. Jerry Zaks is the director. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



"East Is East," by Ayub Khan-Din, at Manhattan Theatre Club.

Closer—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters (Natasha Richardson, Anna Friel, Ciaran Hinds, and Rupert Graves) as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/5/99.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Death of a Salesman—The casting of this production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

East Is East—The children of a Pakistani mother and an English father are torn between cultures, in a drama by Ayub Khan-Din. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Fosse—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Goodnight Children Everywhere—Richard Nelson's drama is set in London and concerns the reunion of four siblings separated during the Second World War. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes June 13.)

Hurrah at Last—In Richard Greenberg's most recent play, a writer (Peter Frechette) is tortured by his family and his finances. A Roundabout staging. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 719-1300.)

The Iceman Cometh—Eugene O'Neill's despairing, four-and-a-half-hour drama about a barroom full of losers. This beautiful production is a rare opportunity to see a fully realized staging of a masterpiece by America's first great playwright. It has countless rewards, not the least of which is an outstanding ensemble cast that Kevin Spacey, in a brilliant turn as the crazily optimistic salesman Hickey, leads in a way that lights up all the other performances rather than overshadowing them. Howard Davies is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—A marvellous collection of songs performed by a dynamic cast, in what turns out to be an oddly didactic cabaret act. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes and bad-talk-show banter. Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Lonesome West—Martin McDonagh's Irish family drama skips decency and gets right down to barbarity. Coleman Connor (Maelíosa Stafford) has blown his father's head off for some minor insult about his hair style, and to keep his brother, Valene (Brían F. O'Byrne), quiet he's signed his inheritance over to his daft sibling. (We know what belongs to Valene because the chairs, the glassware, and the new stove that crowd their hovel all have a "V" taped to them.) Every once in a while, Coleman takes a running leap at Valene, and they roll on the floor, pounding each other in the theatrical equivalent of a range war, while the ineffectual local priest (David Ganly) looks on in morose bewilderment. In its fierce and vivid infantile fury, McDonagh's play moves

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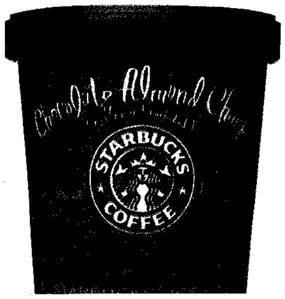
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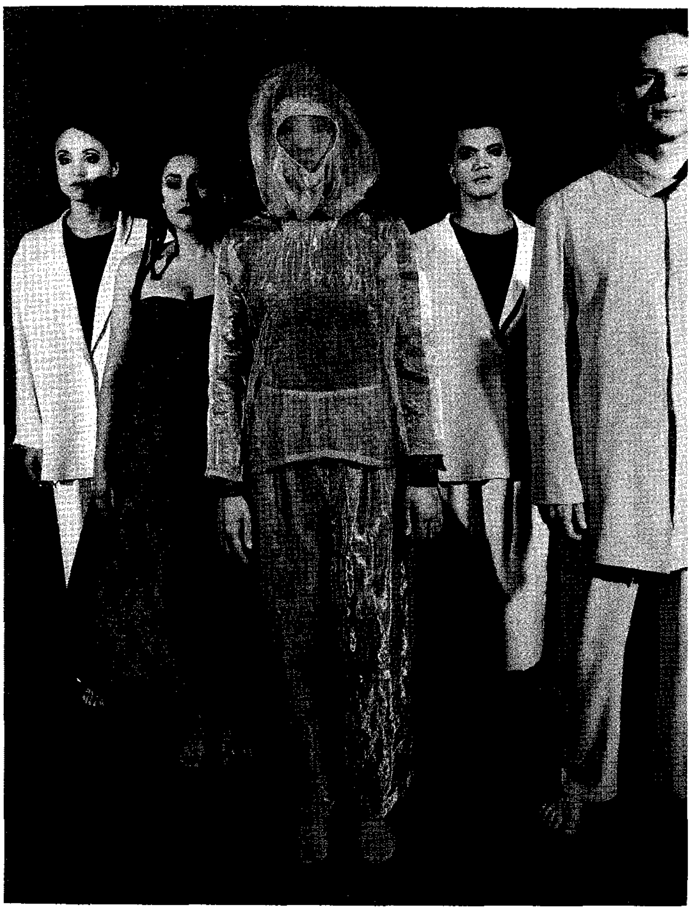

At BAM: The choreographer Trisha Brown directs "L'Orfeo," with a mixed cast of singers and dancers, including Brandi Norton, Patricia Biccire (Euridice), Mariah Maloney, Stanford Makishi, and Simon Keenlyside (Orfeo) (see Dance).

MAX VADUKUL

effortlessly from slapstick sadism to a parable of the blight of Ireland's violence. Directed by Garry Hynes. (5/24/99) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Night Must Fall—The main problem with this National Actors Theatre production of Emlyn Williams's 1935 thriller is that the play was probably never that thrilling to begin with, and it certainly isn't thrilling in 1999. Big house, rich old lady in a wheelchair, charming stranger? *Please.* (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Not About Nightingales—The first play that Thomas Lanier Williams signed "Tennessee," successfully resuscitated by the Royal National Theatre. It's clearly the work of a tenderfoot, yet the choreographic panache of Trevor Nunn's production invests the script with a poetic stylishness the prose lacks. (3/8/99) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Peter Pan—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby is back in town to star in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Ring Round the Moon—Christopher Fry's 1950 adaptation of Anouilh's comedy "L'Invitation au Château." Gerald Gutierrez is the director. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes June 27.)

Snakebit—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy-drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). The cast, though, is topnotch. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Speed Freaks—A business called Paw-Paw's Famous Canned Peas runs into trouble with the narcs, in a thriller by Robert Cucuzza. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes June 13.)

Tennessee Williams Remembered—Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson recall their relationships with the playwright. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 307-4100. Closes June 13.)

La Terrasse—In a comedy by the French screenwriter and dramatist Jean-Claude Carrière, a couple in the midst of a breakup must contend with apartment-hungry Parisians anxious to rent their place. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy starts off slowly, with a couple arguing about who they really are. It's the sort of argument that usually goes no better before midnight, but in this case it quickly escalates into a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving the lovers, the woman's best friend and the friend's lover (a hit man), and her therapist (the hit man's brother) and his lover. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions, and, to his credit, comedy outweighs the theorizing. John Rando, the director, has a good comedic eye, and though Andrew Benator and Nicholas Kepros (as the therapist and his lover) create the only three-dimensional characters, the evening comes off beautifully thanks to the tight script and direction. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

This Lime Tree Bower—A delightful tale (by Conor McPherson, who also wrote "The Weir") of three young Irishmen, each of whom goes off the rails in various ways but, with a little help from the other two, is able to put his life back together again. Neatly told as a series of overlapping monologues, the evening is funny and sharply observed, and sweet without being sentimental. A perfect antithesis to this season's blockbusters. Well acted by T. R. Knight, Drew McVety, and Thomas Lyons. The direction, by Harris Yulin, is appropriately low-key. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes June 27.)

Thwak—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Thy Kingdom's Coming—A satire of Hollywood, by the actor Jeff Daniels. (Neighborhood Playhouse, 340 E. 54th St. 479-8589.)

The 2.5 Minute Ride—The comic actress Lisa Kron gets it: unless a personal story resonates with humanity, it alienates. In her solo show, a tale of her trip to Auschwitz with her father (who survived the Holocaust but whose parents did not), which is offset by extremely funny memories of her family's regular excursions to an Ohio amusement park, Kron pulls off the impossible: she makes you feel something like compassion for a Nazi her father interrogated after the war; you still hate him, but he almost seems human. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes June 13.)

Via Dolorosa—Because David Hare's lively monologue about his first trip to Israel is about Israelis and Arabs, he sees this work as activism; the advertisements for the show refer to it as a "play." In fact, it is neither. It is a somewhat overproduced ninety-minute after-dinner speech that sheds no new light on the conflict. (3/29/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes June 13.)

Vicki Sue Robinson: Behind the Beat—A biographical revue starring the former disco queen. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Weir—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. It has a bittersweet charm, but for all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown—A nothing burger for audiences of all ages. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

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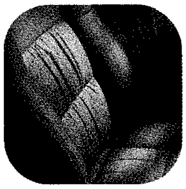

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DANCE

New York City Ballet—June 9 at 8: "Fancy Free," "Interplay," and "West Side Story Suite." . . . ¶ June 10 at 8: "Barber Violin Concerto," "Them Twos," and "I'm Old-Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 11 at 8: "Fancy Free," "The Waltz Project," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ June 12 at 2: "Them Twos," "Ivesiana," "Ash," and "West Side Story Suite." . . . ¶ June 12 at 8: "Red Angels," "Tarantella," "The Waltz Project," and "I'm Old-Fashioned." . . . ¶ June 13 at 3: "Red Angels," "Ash," "Ivesiana," "Tarantella," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ June 15 at 8: "The Chairman Dances," "Sonatas and Interludes," "Ives, Songs," and "West Side Story Suite." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 27.)

American Ballet Theatre—June 9 at 2 and 8: "Airs," "Stepping Stones," and "Push Comes to Shove." . . . ¶ June 10-11 at 8 and June 12 at 2 and 8: "Anastasia." . . . ¶ June 14-15 at 8: "The Snow Maiden." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 19.)

"L'Orfeo"—The choreographer Trisha Brown directs the Monteverdi opera, creating movements for singers (including Simon Keenlyside and Carlo Allemano alternating in the title role) and dancers (her ten-member company) and incorporating elements from other versions of the Orpheus myth, to fashion her own ending. (See also Classical Music.) (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. June 10-12 at 7:30 and June 13 at 3.)

Monte/Brown Dance—The former Elisa Monte dance troupe recognizes the increasing contributions of David Brown with its new name and two new programs, which comprise works choreographed, both separately and together, by the husband-and-wife team. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. June 8 at 7:30, June 9-12 and June 15 at 8, and June 13 at 2 and 7:30. Through June 20.)

"Live Communication"—Savion Glover and fellow-tappers Ayodele Casel, Abron Glover, Jason Samuels, and Omar Edwards perform with an onstage quartet and a host of surprise guests who show up nightly to join in the big jam-session finales. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. June 7-11 and June 14-15 at 8 and June 12 at 6 and 10. Through June 19.)

40Up—The company that never seems to run out of fresh and fully matured talent presents its annual roundup, with premières of works by Gina Gibney, Cherylyn Lavagnino, Amos Pinhasi, David Parker, and Tamar Rogoff. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. June 10-13 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Cake—Sacramento's No. 1 rock band followed up the success of 1997's irresistible hit "The Distance" with "Prolonging the Magic," a fresh package of post-ironic tunes. A fine early-summer show. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. June 10 at 8.)

Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival—The hot and humid sounds of the Skatalites and Marc Ribot y los Cubanos Postizos. (South Street Seaport, Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. June 10 at 8:30.) . . . ¶ Abbey Lincoln, a jazz diva truly worthy of the title, headlines an evening of song that also features the sixties jazz vocalist Teri Thornton and three singers deserving of more attention: Dominique Eade, Nora York, and Claudia Acuña. (South Street Seaport. June 11 at 8:30.) . . . ¶ Even by early-avant-garde standards, the New York Art Quartet was obscure, with but a single recording, in 1964. The N.Y.A.Q.—which featured Milford Graves's wild drumming, Roswell Rudd's lusty trombone work, John Tchicai's subtle alto-saxophone playing, and Amiri Baraka's sign-of-the-times poetry—was together for only a year, but it pointed out provocative new directions in free jazz. Here, the quartet reunites for the first time since 1965. The redoubtable Reggie Workman fills in on bass. (South Street Seaport. June 13 at 8:30.) For more information about the festival, call 343-8805. See also the Knitting Factory, in Jazz and Standards.

Blondie—This reunited seminal late-seventies act cracked the Top Twenty with its latest release, "No Exit." New Wave lives. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. June 10 at 9:15.)

Juan-Carlos Formell, at Joe's Pub.

ALAIN PILON

Ashraf Shareef Khan—The Pakistani sitarist. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. June 11 at 8.)

Tribute to Betty Carter—Carter's death last year not only took a unique singer from us, it also meant the end of the informal jazz boot camp that Carter's bands had become for young players, as well as limbo for Jazz Ahead, the more structured program she organized to encourage talented hopefuls. Turning out to salute this wonderful stylist and one-woman jazz support team are some star players and friends, including Geri Allen, Jack DeJohnette, Dave Holland, Don Braden, Curtis Lundy, and Marc Cary. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. June 12 at 8.)

Lavender Light—The lesbian-and-gay gospel choir. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. June 12 at 8.)

Van Morrison—Morrison has been known to stare down audiences and stalk unprovoked off the stage; he's the only performer who can make Bob Dylan look like a cheerleader. He can be awful, but on some nights, when the planets are properly aligned, there are few finer voices around. With blues legend Taj Mahal. (Roseland. June 13 at 8. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. June 14 at 7:30.)

JVC Jazz Festival—Clarinettist Ken Peplowski, who regularly invokes the King of Swing in his own playing, is just the man to lead a big-band tribute to Benny Goodman. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. June 14 at 8.) . . . ¶ Fourteen guitarists, including Mark Whitfield and Pat Martino, turn out to pay homage to Johnny Smith, one of the smoothest (before smooth became a dirty word) of all bop guitarists. (Kaye Playhouse. June 15 at 8.) . . . ¶ A group of New York players whose interests lean toward swing and bop rather than toward de-rigueur modal bop—trumpeters Warren Vaché and Randy Sandke among them—display their delightfully out-of-step stylings. (Kaye Playhouse. June 16 at 8.) The festival continues through June 27. For more information, call 501-1390.

Shania Twain—Is she a soft-porn cowgirl (Garth Brooks in a bustier) or a pop star cleverly mining the gilded fields of country music (a Canadian Dolly Parton)? Sadly, she's simply the new Def Leppard: Twain's husband, producer, and principal songwriter is Robert John (Mutt) Lange, a mellowed hard-rock auteur who made that English hair-metal band into millionaires. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. June 15 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—June 9: The lovely, eccentric singer-songwriter and sometime Golden Palomino vocalist **SYD STRAW.** Also on June 9: Singer-songwriter **ELLIOTT MURPHY.** June 12: **BUSTER POINDEXTER** leads his Spanish Rocketship Band.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—The delectable duo **CIBO MATTO** finishes its four-night stand on June 11.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—June 11: A few years ago, **SPARKLEHORSE** leader Mark Linkous suffered a bizarre tragedy that seemed to perfectly encapsulate his desperately twisted, and highly personal, music. After a night of excess, he passed out; more than twelve hours later, he suffered a heart attack upon being revived and wound up partially paralyzed. He spent six months in a wheelchair. Physically, Linkous is now O.K., but on the excellent "Good Morning Spider" his latest songs bring to mind a crippled soul undergoing public therapy. With **MERCURY REV.** June 15: **FUN LOVIN' CRIMINALS.** One of the more gifted groups of white kids to appropriate hip-hop and sample-driven culture, this New York trio demonstrated impressive depth on its début record, "Come Find Yourself." Along with the usual good-time grooves, the group covered "We Have All the Time in the World," the love theme from "On Her Majesty's Secret Service." Now that's street cred. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—June 8: Bassist **JUAN-CARLOS FORMELL,** the son of Juan Formell, leader of the legendary Cuban ensemble Los Van Van, fled Cuba six years ago in search of artistic freedom, which in his case meant playing music other than the popular, hard-driving *timbia* of his father's

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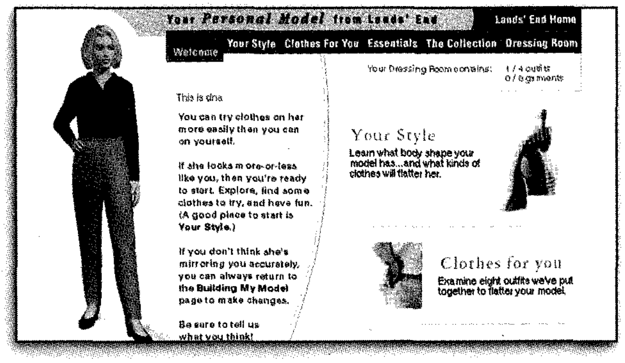
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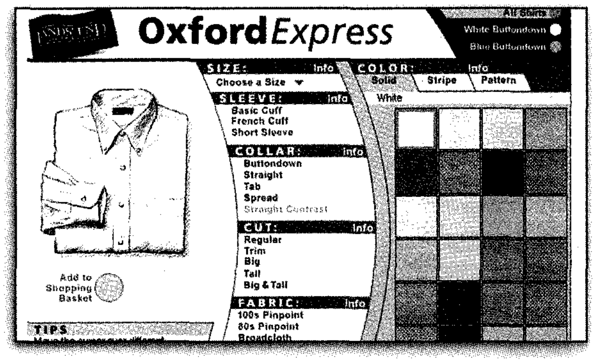
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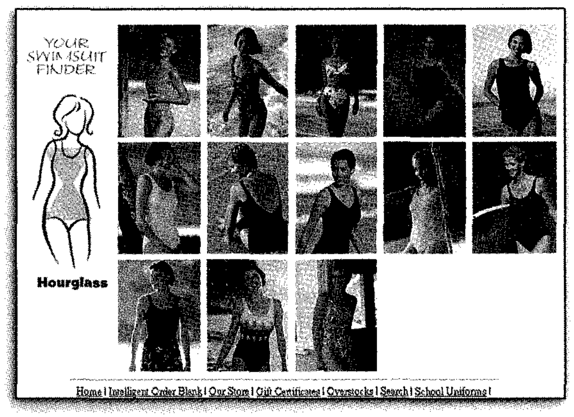
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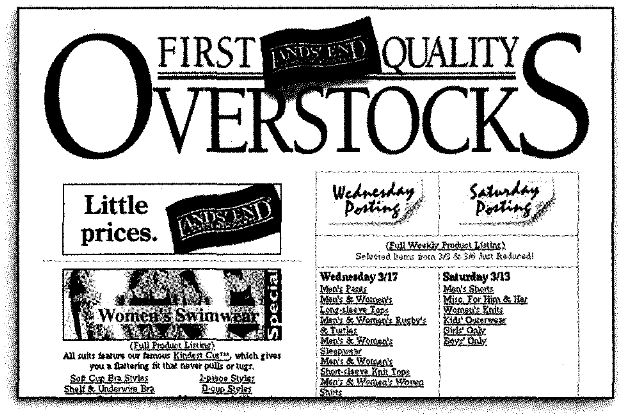
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band. He switched to guitar and ended up playing mostly in the New York City subway system, but after a while a few club owners came to their senses and Formell got some regular, aboveground gigs. He's just released his major-label début, "Songs from a Little Blue House," a refreshing update of the *son*, *changui*, and "feeling" (a descendant of bolero) of pre-revolutionary Cuba. Formell's vision and talent are matched by the exceptional musicianship of his quartet, which is here joined by guitarist MARK WHITFIELD and trumpeter BRIAN LYNCH.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—June 12: MARSHALL CRENSHAW, the one-time great pretender of power pop. His most recent album, "The 9 Volt Years: Battery Powered Home Demos & Curios (1979-198?)," is an amusing but slightly sad offering that includes a scratchy, homespun version of his greatest hit, "Someday, Someway."

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—June 10: JOI. Led by two brothers from Bengal, Farook and Haroon Shamsher, this London-based d.j. collective has been a fixture of the U.K. dance scene since the early nineties. When they perform in a concert setting, they often add sitar, tablas, and vocals to their hypnotic mixture of break beats and traditional Asian rhythms. Dining.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—June 10: The tie-dye-and-bluejeans sounds of GOD STREET WINE. June 14: The original dub master LEE SCRATCH PERRY and MAD PROFESSOR.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The long, narrow Oak Room is a notoriously difficult space, one that practically forces the singer to neglect half the audience half the time. MAUREEN MC GOVERN takes it a step further by facing the wall at one point during her current show, thereby ignoring both sides of the room equally. The reason she can pull it off, without detracting from her slow-burn interpretation of the Peggy Lee classic "Fever," is that her strengths are singing and musicality rather than glitzy personality or in-your-face shtick. Flawless production, a wide range, focussed timbre, and impeccable pitch are guaranteed throughout her imaginative program; highlights include a complex arrangement of Gershwin's "The Man I Love," a brutal rendition of Sondheim's "Could I Leave You?," and an Ellington set that includes "On a Turquoise Cloud" (a rarely heard unaccompanied vocalise) and "Caravan" (in which Lee Musiker goes wild at the Baldwin). This topflight show continues through June 19. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—June 9-12: The HOLLY HOFFMAN quartet. Hoffman, a gifted jazz flutist, has swing insurance in the form of the dean of all bassists: the mighty RAY BROWN. Dining.

JAZZ NOTES

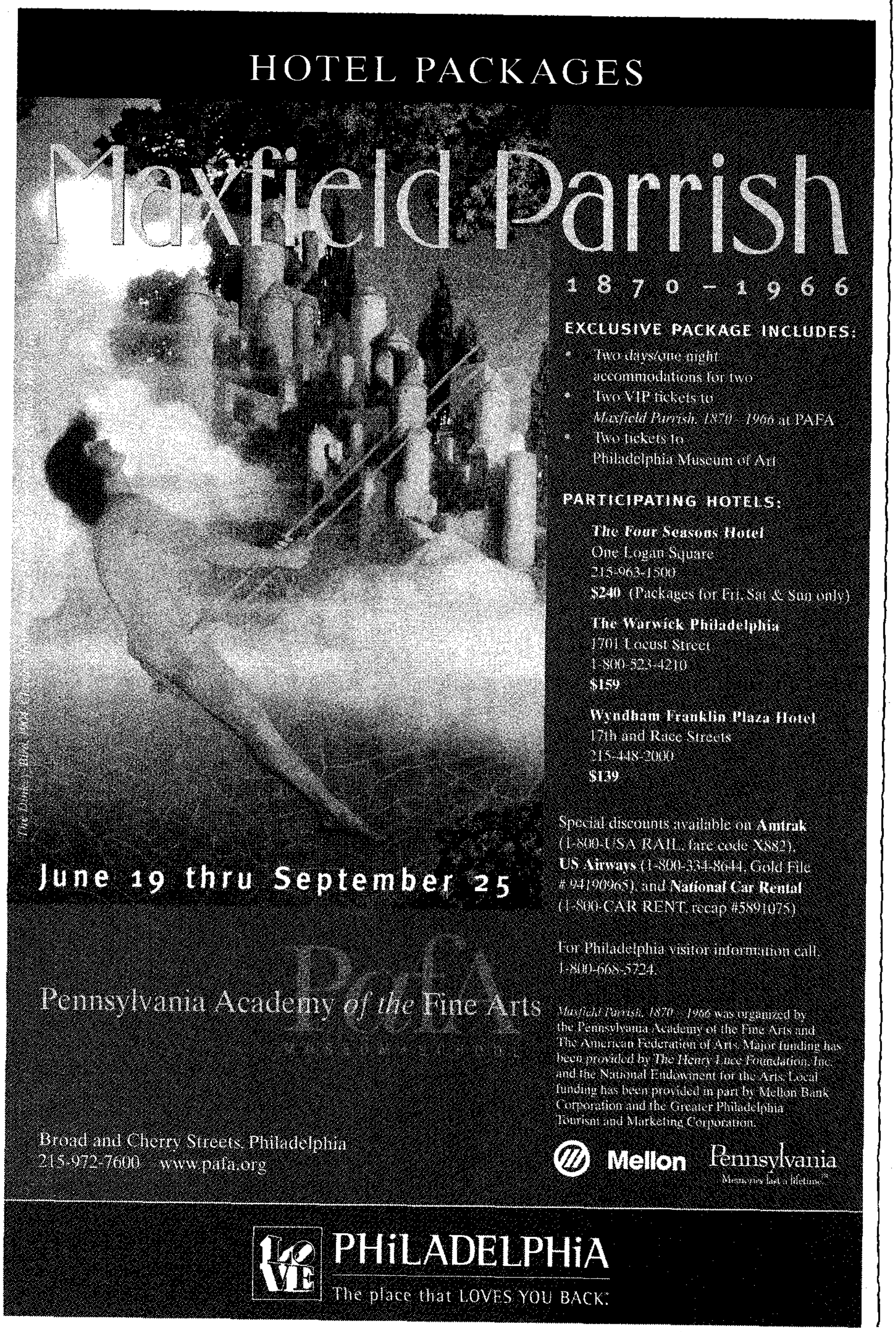
It's a Microscopic World—Some of the most distinctive jazz of the past few years can be directly traced to the demise of the Microscopic Septet. When that singular ensemble—which was acclaimed for its deft saxophone writing and daft sense of humor—split after eleven years, in 1992, its co-leaders, saxophonist Philip Johnston and pianist Joel Forrester, formed topflight bands of their own. Both men are dyed-in-the-wool eclectics who don't depend on the modal or hard-bop traditions—the mother's milk of today's mainstream jazz. **The Needless Kiss**, the latest recording by Johnston's Transparent Quartet, is full of nineteen-fifties formalism (West Coast cool, Modern Jazz Quartet subtlety), which Johnston gleefully personalizes with sharp phrasings and free jazz tangents. It's all held together by Johnston's fine alto-saxophone work and superb soprano-saxophone playing, and by a drummerless unit that makes imaginative use of vibes, piano, baritone saxophone, and bass.

Joel Forrester leads People Like Us, a quartet that just released its third album, **Believe It**, which was recorded in 1997. This piano virtuoso calls on his own set of jazz heroes—individualists like Thelonious Monk, Gerry Mulligan, James P. Johnson, and Herbie Nichols—to inform his writing and improvising. Forrester's simpatico bandmates—baritone saxophonist Claire Daly, drummer Denis Charles (a brilliant player who died unexpectedly last year), and bassist Dave Hofstra (who also plays in Johnston's band)—generate an infectious rhythmic bounce that complements the formal grace of the leader's indelible tunes. Subtle levity is still at the heart of much of Forrester and Johnston's music; thankfully, both bandleaders have abandoned the overt humor that sometimes obscured the brilliance and craftsmanship of the septet.

The Microscopic influence can also be heard on two other recent disks. Claire Daly's **Swing Low**, a melodious set of imaginatively arranged standards and offbeat tunes, establishes her as our most gifted mainstream baritone saxophonist; **Joel Forrester and the Illustrious Others: Pre-Microscopic Music Circa 1980** shows that Forrester and Johnston (who appears throughout) were, in their wayward youth, just as whip-smart and eager to follow roads less travelled as they are today. (All the above albums are on the Koch label.)

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through June 26, BOBBY SHORT. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, BARBARA CARROLL is in attendance.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through June 13: The CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE quartet. McBride is a formidable young bassist who scares the pants off most veterans of the instrument. He's a crafty traditionalist who



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balances his doctrinaire ways with a mischievous leaning toward funk. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—The Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival continues through June 13. **MARIO PAVONE** and the **CHARLES LLOYD** quartet take over on June 9. This excellent double bill features Pavone's Nu Trio, which unites the bassist leader with an equally dynamic rhythm partner, drummer **MATT WILSON,** and pianist **PETER MADSEN.**/The subtle, engrossing saxophonist Lloyd brings in another all-star backing band, this time featuring guitarist **JOHN ABERCROMBIE,** bassist **MARC JOHNSON,** and the marvellous drummer **BILLY HIGGINS.** Also on June 9, **MARTY EHRLICH'S** Traveler's Tales band features the superb reedman and drummer **BOBBY PREVITE,** one of Ehrlich's most empathetic musical partners. June 10: Saxophone power provided by two hard-blowing players: **ODEAN POPE,** a mainstay of Max Roach's bands, and free-jazz-icon-in-the-making **DAVID S. WARE.** June 11: A power trio joining guitarist **VERNON REID,** bassist **MELVIN GIBBS,** and drummer **RONALD SHANNON JACKSON.** It'll be like old times for the three players, who worked together in the eighties in Jackson's band Decoding Society. Also on June 11: Sonic Youth guitarist **LEE RANALDO** and drummer **WILLIAM HOOKER** stir up trouble in a duet setting. June 12: Three left-field guitarists highlight the festivities: fastidious new-jazz picker **JOE MORRIS'S** quartet features violinist **MAT MANERI;** the great, unclassifiable **BILL FRISELL** gets folksy with the banjo-violin-and-bass unit the Willies; and guitarist **MARC RIBOT,** another eclectic with big ideas, plays with the duo of saxophonist **ROY NATHANSON** and keyboardist **ANTHONY COLEMAN.** June 13: An evening with **DAVE DOUGLAS**—one of the brightest lights of next-millennium jazz—is a smart way to close out the festival. Three of the trumpeter's most trenchant ensembles—his crackling pianoless quartet, his Balkan-tinged chamber group Charms of the Night Sky, and his thick-textured sextet—will perform.

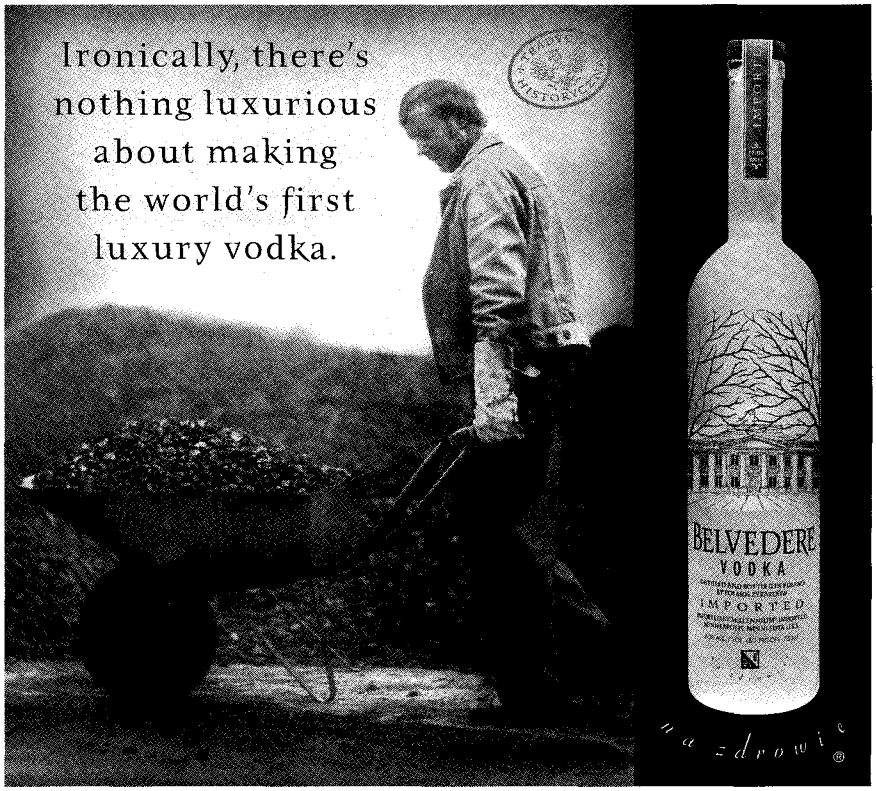
SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through June 13: The **EDDIE HENDERSON** group. Best known for his work with Herbie Hancock's early-seventies proto-fusion bands, trumpeter Henderson has spent the past few years shoring up his reputation as a skilled bop-and-beyond improviser. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through June 13: "Friendly Fire," the new encounter between saxophonists **JOE LOVANO** and **GREG OSBY,** is surprisingly effective, with Lovano's lyrical, low-cast tenor lines meshing well with Osby's biting alto phrasing. Although heated exchanges will certainly ensue, these two can be counted on to put the music first. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Cézanne to van Gogh: The Collection of Dr. Gachet." In van Gogh's 1890 portrait of Dr. Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, the subject looks literally blue. Sitting listlessly against a background of pure cobalt, the weary doctor seems far more depressed than his famous patient, who committed suicide a few months later. In fact, "Dr. Saffron" (so called for his variably tinted red hair) was a tireless enthusiast of avant-garde art, and his appreciation of it often exceeded that of the artists themselves. By *purchase, gift, and trade (art for medical services)*, he eventually filled his house near Paris with paintings by Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Sisley, Renoir, and, above all, Cézanne and van Gogh. More than fifty of these works have travelled across the Atlantic for the first time. A handful, including self-portraits by van Gogh and Guillaumin, would be on anyone's list of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist greatest hits. The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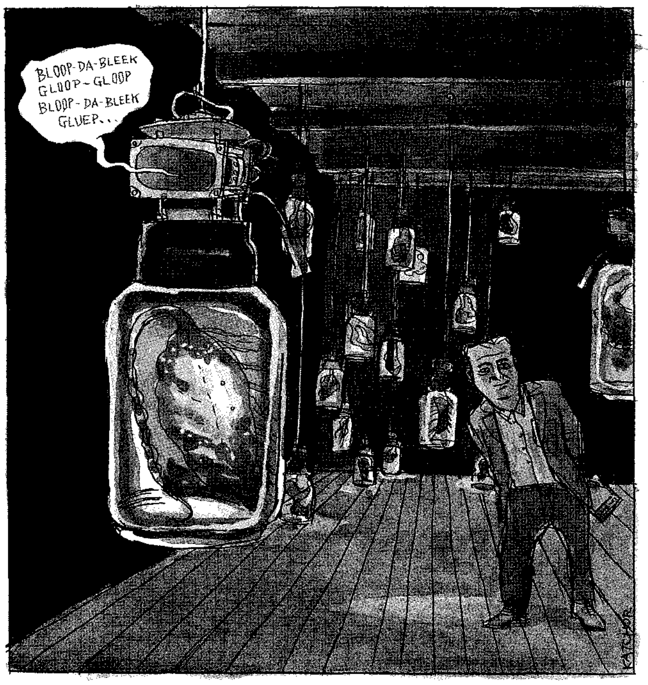
majority, though, are fascinating oddities—minor, unfinished, or transitional works, the kind that blossom under an indulgent eye. Doubts about their authenticity have occasionally been raised, but a selection of Gachet's own paintings, and those of his equally talentless son, effectively squelch the idea that either was a capable forger. If anything explains Gachet's forlorn demeanor, it must have been the thought of his own artistic abilities. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ "Devotions and Diversions: Prints and Books from the Late Middle Ages in Northern Europe." Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Prayer for a Queen: The Hours of Jeanne D'Évreux" takes advantage of the rebinding of the illuminated manuscript to display thirty-two images from the prayer book belonging to the fourteenth-century French queen. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Our New Clothes: Acquisitions of the 1990s in the Costume Institute." Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ "Guardians of the Longhouse: Art in Borneo." . . . ¶ "Hans Hofmann at the Metropolitan Museum." . . . ¶ "Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream." Through Aug. 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Floodsongs," Mary Lucier's video installation about the 1997 devastation of Grand Forks, North Dakota. Instead of showing footage of the flood and the subsequent fires that destroyed much of the city, Lucier focusses on the aftermath. The camera pans in slow motion through a succession of deserted, disordered interiors, and lingers lovingly on details like stained wallpaper and ruined LPs. On smaller monitors nearby, six Grand Forkians are shown speaking—presumably about their experiences during the tragedy, although the whispery vocal soundtrack (by composer Earl Howard) makes it impossible to hear what they're saying. After a few minutes of this portentousness, one longs for the straightforward storytelling and relatively crisp visuals of, say, TV news. Through June 20. . . . ¶ "Collecting in Depth: Drawings by Grosz, Schwitters, Ernst, and Klee." In a nod to the barrage of drawing shows currently on view around Manhattan, MOMA's staff has put together an exhibition that casually proves who's top dog when it comes to twentieth-century works on paper. Each of the four artists represented gets a room to himself, and each room is crowded with delights and oddities. Schwitters, with almost forty works, including a handful of his finest abstract collages, steals the spotlight, but even Max Ernst, the Surrealist ideologue who should be the show's weak link, turns in a memorably lovely trifle, made from advertisements for panama hats. Through July 20. . . . ¶ "Alfred Hitchcock: Behind the Silhouette." Through Aug. 17. . . . ¶ "Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963-74." Through June 16. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)



An installation by Young Sun Lim, at Liebman Magnan.

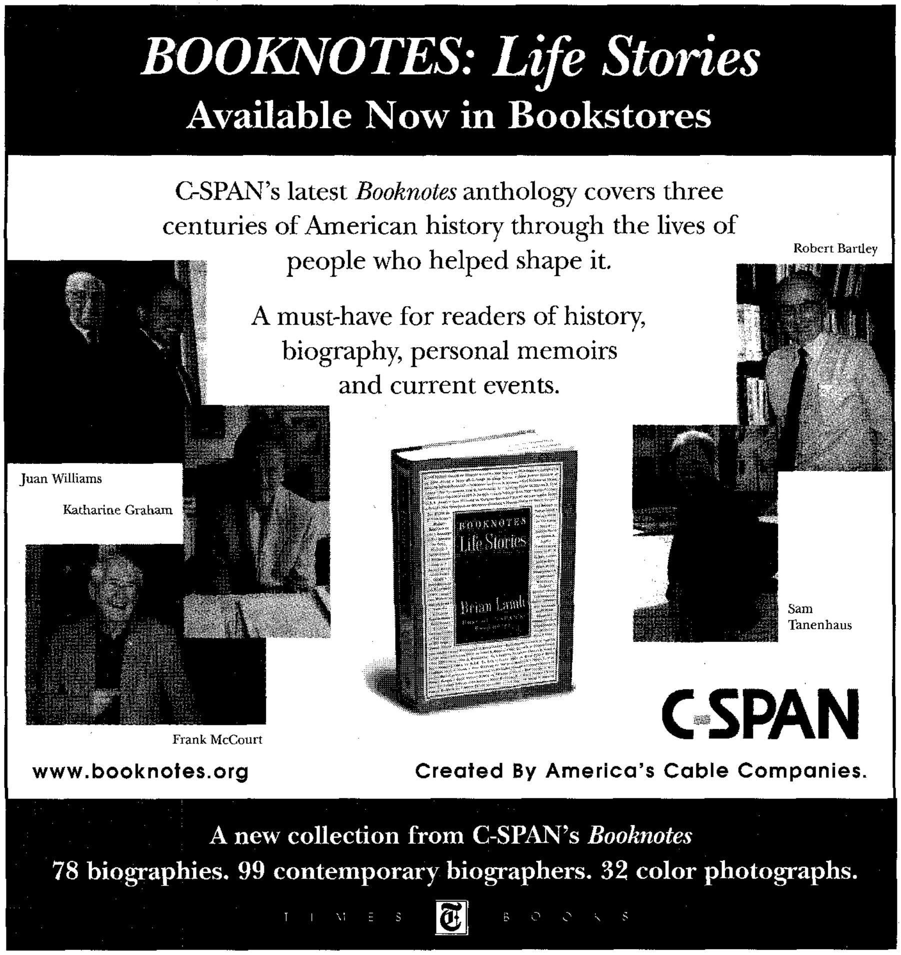
BEN KATCHOR

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Surrealism: Two Private Eyes" offers paintings, photographs, sculptures, books, and ephemera from the collections of Nesuhi Ertegun and Daniel Filipacchi. Through Sept. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part I: 1900-50)." The first half of America's mid-career retrospective, installed on all five floors, includes Grant Wood's "American Gothic," Ben Shahn's "The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti," Alfred Stieglitz's "The Steerage," Georgia O'Keeffe's "Summer Days," and Jackson Pollock's "Number 27." Through Aug. 22. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"A Voice of Conscience: The Prints of Jack Levine." Through June 20. . . . ¶ "Domestic Transformations: Working in Brooklyn" is a homemaking-themed show by borough artists Ron Baron, Andy Yoder, Jean Blackburn, and Ann Agee. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Mariko Mori: Empty Dream." A survey of this young Japanese artist's five-year career, in which she, depending on your point of view, either embodies the best (so far) of cross-cultural, neo-Pop extravagance or panders to low-brow taste with costly production values and glitzy special effects. Mori's earlier works underscore affiliations with Japanimation and with theatrical self-portraiture of past decades, in particular Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Stills." Mori's more recent 3-D video works employ extraordinary digital effects, as in "Nirvana" (1996-97): the artist as haloed bodhisattva (or something close to it) takes center stage, while her techno-enhanced handmaidens sit in the lotus position and zoom around on disks of flame. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ "Impressionists in Winter: Effets de Neige" presents snow scenes by Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Gauguin, and friends. Through Aug. 29. (Open Tuesdays for the Impressionist show only, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease" revisits a popular exhibit from the turn of the century, in which the museum focussed on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tuberculosis. The current and broader look at infectious diseases includes giant models of viruses and bacteria which appear to spread across the galleries, a diorama of a "high-containment" laboratory, and a sculpted re-creation of an outbreak of the Black Plague showing rats running down the ropes of ships into fourteenth-century Venice. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition." Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—"New York Collects: Drawings and Watercolors 1900-1950" represents a departure for this lovably staid institution, which until now has coughed and smiled politely at any mention of the twentieth century. As if to make up for this long demurral, the Morgan curator William M. Griswold has culled works from seventy-five New York private collections to assemble a lively overview of modernist draftsmanship, starting with a trio of late Cézanne watercolors and concluding with a large, elegant Pollock painted on rice paper. In between, there are outstanding works by Matisse, Picasso, Beckmann, Gris, and Gorky, along with a host of more unexpected pleasures, such as a color-drunk Emil Nolde landscape and a self-portrait of a young Lucian Freud with his mouth open, justifiably stupefied by his own skill. Through Aug. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Ellsworth Kelly—"Spectrums 1953-1972." After quietly working throughout much of the seventies and eighties on the periphery of the art world's attention, this grand master of abstraction has reëmerged in the nineties very near the center. Perhaps this has something to do with the reinvigoration of the medium of painting, abstract and otherwise, during these years; perhaps it's just credit due. In any case, the "Spectrums" are relatively unknown to today's audience (none were included in the artist's recent Guggenheim retrospective). Almost dry in their quasi-Minimalist reduction to vertical, rectangular stripes of color, they nevertheless sustain the sort of vivid coloristic jolt one expects from Kelly. Through June 26. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400.)

Short List—**john alexander** and **tomás sanchez,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; both shows through June 26. . . . **carlos alfonzo,** Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through June 30. . . . **joseph beuys,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through July 9. . . . **eric fischl,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Through June 26. . . . **charles henri ford,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through July 2. . . . **per kirkeby,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through June 11. . . . **sean scully,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St., 223-2227; Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St., 315-0470. Both shows through June 11. . . . **bernardo siciliano,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through June 11. . . . **may stevens,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Aug. 27. . . . **jim touchton,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through June 26. . . . **cy twombly,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through June 12. . . . **stanford white,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 838-0333. Through June 11.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Linda Burnham—This Los Angeles-based artist continues to use corny, fifties-era images of feminine domesticity in her paintings, although these are usually partly concealed by aggressive patterns of spots, stripes, and

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doilies. Burnham's use of painterly trademarks—for instance, globs of paint that nearly shout, "Tenth Street School Abstract Expressionism"—seems no less clichéd than the apron-wearing housewives. It's all very Sigmar Polke. Through June 25. (Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555.)

Sandra Cinto—"Constructed Happiness," the New York début of this Brazilian artist, consists primarily of wall drawings executed in an appealing, Edward Gorey-esque style. Long, meandering ladders—or perhaps train tracks—connect floating islands, airborne trees, dangling trapezes, and candelabra. Occasionally, these whimsical motifs stray beyond the walls, to cover a small bookcase, say, or the bottom of a partially filled bathtub. But the inclusion of such objects feels forced; Cinto's happiness seems livelier when it's unconstructed. Through July 2. (Bonakdar Jancou, 521 W. 21st St. 414-4144.)

Jacci Den Hartog—If Hokusai had been commissioned to design a miniature-golf course, the results might have looked something like these odd sculptures. In most of them, waves made of glossy blue-and-white polyurethane splash against plaster cliffs, curling and twisting into fingery, turkey-wattle forms. They're frivolous and fun to look at. Best of all is the thirteen-foot-long "Passing a Pleasant Summer II," which consists of four waterfalls that run into each other to form a single, meandering rivulet suspended in the air. Through June 26. (Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 243-3335.)

Young Sun Lim—"The Room of the Host," an installation of two hundred glass jars, each of which hangs by a string from the ceiling, contains a whirling, lit-up blob of silicone foam, and generates its own soft hum. Despite the elaborate lab-specimen-meets-Lava-lamp technology, the spookiness evoked is of a homey sort, like the clinking of spirit bottles on the tree in your great-auntie's front yard. Through June 26. (Liebman Magnan, 552 W. 24th St. 255-3225.)

Shirin Neshat—Neshat explores the nature of male and female experience in Islam with "Rapture," an installation of two videos shown on opposite walls. On one side, a crowd of men, all identically clothed in black trousers and white shirts, perform vaguely ritualistic acts in an ancient fort; on the other side, a small army of women, all wearing chadors, marches toward the sea. The symbolism in these videos is almost comically simpleminded, but the imagery is rich enough to make them entertaining. Through June 19. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

Tony Smith (1912-1980)—"Stinger," a steel fabrication of a sculpture first realized in plywood in 1968 at the Museum of Modern Art. As previous exhibitions of works by Smith and Sol LeWitt have demonstrated, Paula Cooper's vast space is ideal for monumental sculptures. "Stinger" is composed of linked sets of tetrahedrons and octahedrons, two forms that Smith especially loved. It rests on the floor as a semi-enclosed structure, which one can walk around as well as enter. A bronze version of a related work, "Trap" (1968), is on view in the alcove gallery. Through July 15. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105.)

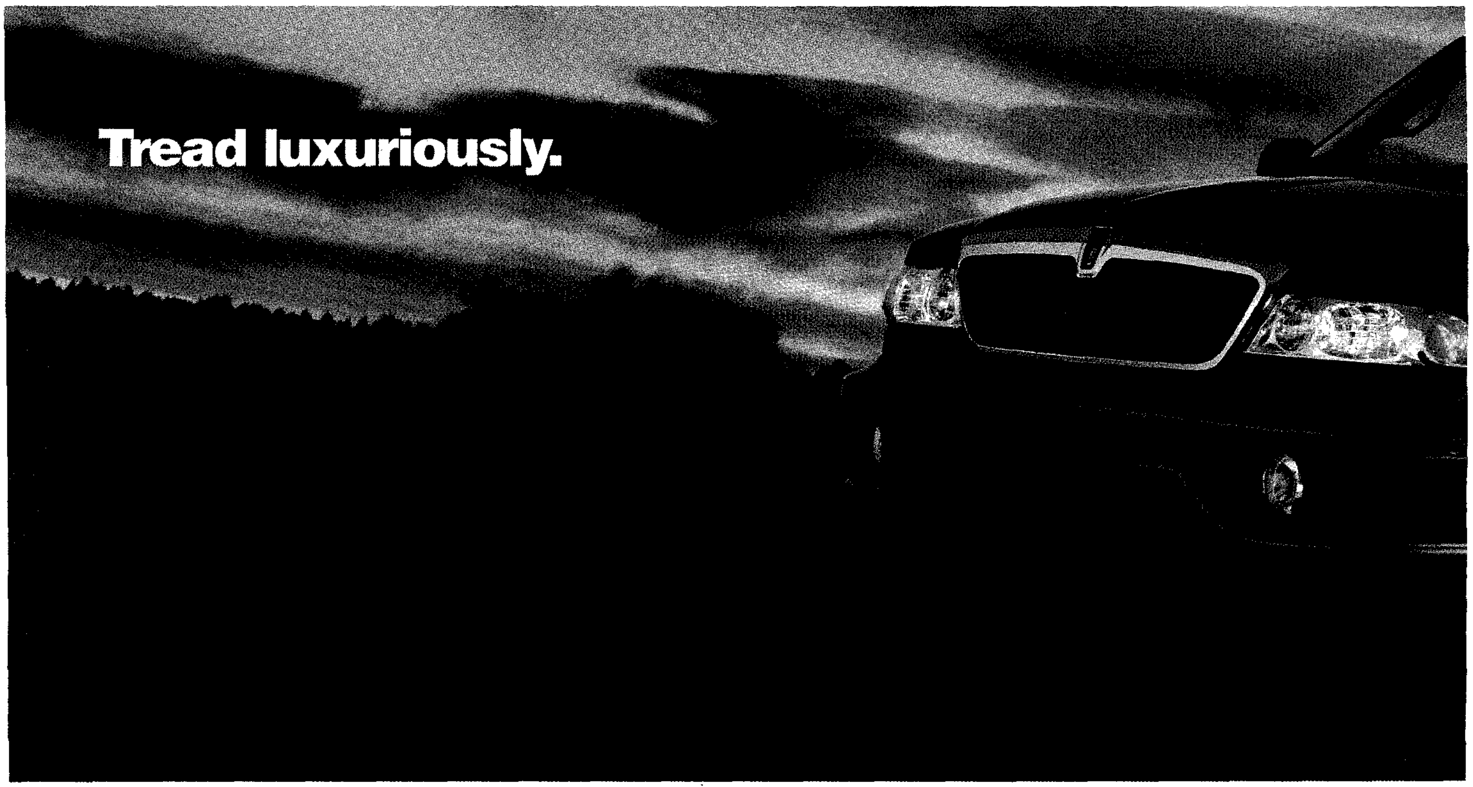
Hiro Yamagata—"American Lips," a series of paintings featuring large-scale blowups of, well, lips belonging to American women, both famous (Liz Taylor, Sharon Stone, Goldie Hawn) and unknown. But, enlarged as such, they are all anonymous. Preternaturally wet and glistening, these images suggest porn as much as they do Revlon. Through June 25. (Marlborough, 211 W. 19th St. 463-8634.)

Short List—**JOSÉ BEDIA**, Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through July 3. . . . **GÜNTER BRUS**, Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through June 19. . . . **IVAN CHERMAYEFF**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through June 26. . . . **MARISA TELLERÍA DIEZ**, Baumgartner, 418 W. 15th St. 633-2276. Through June 30. . . . **MANUEL ESNOZ**, Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through June 12. . . . **AKI FUJIYOSHI**, AC Project Room, 453 W. 17th St. 645-4970. Through June 26. . . . **RACHEL HARRISON**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through June 19. . . . **LIZ LARNER**, 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through June 19. . . . **PAULINE STELLA SANCHEZ**, Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297. Through June 26. . . . **CHRISTIAN SCHUMANN**, Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323. Through June 19. . . . **RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA**, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Through Aug. 31. . . . **TERRY WINTERS**, Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through June 25.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Ashley Bickerton—Prankish and grotesque paintings by an artist who moved to Bali a few years ago and declared that he wanted to be known for all professional and legal purposes as Cat Stevens. Since then, Bickerton/Stevens learned to handle an airbrush with aplomb, and produced a collection of images that either parody or embody a teenagerish fantasy life. Decapitated heads grimace atop long, wavering stalks. A nude vampire nurses a piglet. Vultures descend upon a wounded golfer. The desired response seems to be "heh-heh," but it's more likely to be a dispirited "huh?" Through June 26. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160.)

Philip Taaffe—Mixed-medium pattern paintings, concocted from photographic images of starfish, seed cones, animal skulls, and dragonflies. Printed in appetizing pinks and blues and golds, these elegant, vaguely exotic natural forms project an air of calculated hedonism. Most of the time, however, Taaffe is content to lay them across the can-



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vas in static patterns, as if each painting were a tray of unusual hors d'œuvres. An opulent but inert show. Through June 19. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

SHORT LIST—**TRACEY EMIN,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through June 19. . . . **NOBU FUKUI,** Central Fine Arts, 596 Broadway. 966-8836. Through June 12. . . . **LISA KRIVACKA,** Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7; Sundays, 1 to 6; through July 6. . . . **GUILLERMO KUITCA,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through June 12. . . . **VIRGIL MARTI,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through June 12. . . . **ANTOINE PEVSNER,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through July 10. . . . **MARTIN RAMIREZ,** Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200. Through July 31. . . . **HUBERT SCHMALIX,** Erben, 476 Broome St. 966-5283. Through June 12.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—June 9: Jewelry. . . . ¶ June 10-11: Art Deco. . . . ¶ June 11: Moderately priced furniture, rugs, and decorative pieces from the estate of Glenn Bernbaum, the late proprietor of Mortimer's restaurant. . . . ¶ June 12: A "Collectors' Carrousel," including numerous dolls and toys, a forty-seven-lot collection of important Coney Island memorabilia, and items relating to rock and roll and to Hollywood. The pièce de résistance is surely the Kramdens' complete kitchen suite—table with chairs, Homepride stove, Beldings National icebox, and so on—familiar to "Honeymooners" aficionados. It carries an estimate of ten to fifteen thousand dollars, which is the same as that attached to Jackie Gleason's bus-driver costume, which is also being offered. . . . ¶ June 14: Russian art and objects of virtu, from eighteenth-century icons to Fabergé flatware. . . . ¶ June 15: Watches and clocks. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—June 9: Printed books and manuscripts. . . . ¶ June 10: Fine jewelry. . . . ¶ June 11: Twentieth-century decorative art. . . . ¶ June 14: Watches. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** Sales of photography and of twentieth-century decorative pieces. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430. June 9.)

PHILLIPS—An auction of fine jewelry, plus an Art Deco *pendule mystérieuse* by Cartier, decorated with platinum, gold, and diamonds, the mystery being that the hands seem to float unattached above the clock's face. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. June 13.)

"Montgomery, 1963," by Flip Schulke, at Danziger.

PHOTOGRAPHY

LEAH DEMCHICK / "AUDREY STYLE"—Gum-bichromate color images of India. / Portraits of the girl everybody fell in love with, by such photographers as Cecil Beaton, Philippe Halsman, Raymond Voinquel, and Bob Willoughby. Both shows through June 12. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

"CLOTHES OFF"—A group show of nudes by, among others, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Judy

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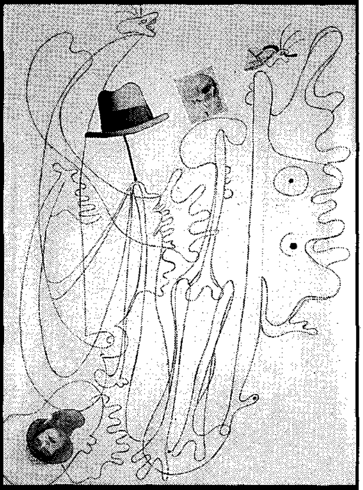

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Joan Miró, Untitled, *1933, Richard S. Zeisler Collection, New York, © 1999 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.*

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Dater, Bruce Davidson, André Kertész, and Edward Weston. Through July 2. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"Down from Up"—Classic and contemporary images made from an elevated vantage point, by such artists as Alvin Langdon Coburn, Diane Cook, Mario Giacomelli, Emmet Gowin, Len Jenshel, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Through July 9. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays.)

"Hungary Today: 5 Contemporary Photographers"—A survey of recent work by Gabor Kerekes, Zsolt Peter Barta, Lenke Szilagyi, Judit M. Horvath, and Gyorgy Stalter. Through June 12. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.)

"Pure Products of America"—A three-artist group show of black-and-white photographs of suburban life by Robert Adams, Bill Owens, and Henry Wessel. Through July 16. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

"To the Moon!"—Vintage NASA photographs from the space program. Through June 30. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

Short List—**MERRY ALPERN,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through July 1. . . . **DIETER APPELT** and **JOHN SZARKOWSKI,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through June 12. . . . **RALPH BARTHOLOMEW, JR.,** De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through June 12. . . . **DAVID BERG,** Carter, 560 Broadway. 966-1933. Through June 12. . . . **SASHA BEZZUBOV** and **AUGUST SANDER,** Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Both shows through July 2. . . . **GIANNI BERENGO GARDIN,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through June 19. . . . **FRANK GOHLKE** and **STUART KLIPPER,** Dorsky, 379 West Broadway. 966-6170. Through June 26. . . . **ANDREA MODICA,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through June 26. . . . **TINA MODOTTI AND EDWARD WESTON,** Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059. Through July 17. . . . **TRACEY MOFFATT,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2753. Through June 25. . . . **WILLIAM MORTENSEN,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through June 26. . . . **ARNOLD NEWMAN,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through June 19. . . . **FLIP SCHULKE** and **JOEL MEYEROWITZ,** Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through June 25. . . . **CINDY SHERMAN,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through June 26. . . . **SUSAN UNTERBERG,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through July 2. . . . **PAUL WOLFF,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through June 19.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Free outdoor performances of operas in concert versions. **LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR,** with Youngok Shin, Stuart Neill, Haijing Fu, and Paul Plishka; conducted by Gareth Morrell. (Pelham Bay Park, the Bronx. June 9. . . . ¶ Cunningham Park, Queens. June 12. . . . ¶ Great Lawn, Central Park. June 15.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Mary Mills, Gwynne Geyer, Marcello Giordani, and Motti Kaston; Marco Armiliato. (Cunningham Park, Queens. June 11.) (Evenings at 8. In case of questionable weather, call 362-6000.)

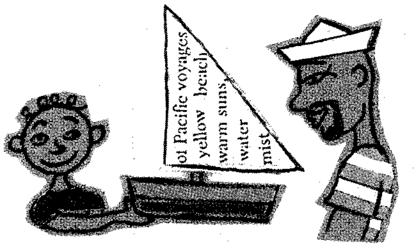
Encompass Music Theatre—Presenting staged performances of Britten's dramatic cantata "Phaedra" (featuring soprano Elizabeth Keusch) and George Antheil's one-act opera "Venus in Africa." (Salon Theatre, 432 E. 91st St. June 9 and June 11-12 at 8 and June 13 at 3. For information about tickets, call 594-7880.)

"L'Orfeo"—Monteverdi's groundbreaking "favola in musica" of 1607, with René Jacobs conducting his early-music ensembles, Con-

BOOK CURRENTS

Deconstructing Dad

IN **Becoming Dad: Black Men and the Journey to Fatherhood** (Longstreet), Leonard Pitts, Jr., a columnist with the Miami *Herald*, describes an afternoon when his father, who had hoped his son would be more athletically inclined, grabbed a book out of his hand and ordered him outside: "I snatched up a . . . tube of toothpaste . . . and read the label loudly, defiantly. I would prove that he couldn't make me what he wanted me to be." Pitts's book is a collection of interviews with black fathers—many of whom were raised without their own fathers. It is also a memoir, one of several to appear recently that have been written by men who hope to make sense of their own lives by reëxamining their paternal influences.



My Father's Gun (Dutton), by freelance reporter Brian McDonald, is a lucid chronicle of the lives and N.Y.P.D. careers of the author's grandfather, father, and brother. McDonald recalls his father, a retired squad commander in the Fort Apache section of the Bronx, attending his Mighty Midget football games after an operation in which three-quarters of his ulcerated stomach was removed: "After the games, as he walked me to the car, some of the other cop fathers would approach to say hello. In their words, in their demeanor, there was respect. . . . [As they] knew well, no one spends fourteen years as a street cop in the South Bronx and comes out whole."

In **The View from Alger's Window** (Knopf), Tony Hiss recalls his life at the time when his father, Alger Hiss, the founding Secretary-General of the United Nations and a suspected Russian spy, was sent to prison, in 1950. In letters to his son, Hiss spun yarns of the Sugar Lump Boy, who was "sweet, simple, mischievous, and comically vainglorious." Tony Hiss recalls, "No matter how bad things got for me, he was always in worse shape and needed my help right away."

Henri Matisse and his son Pierre, the New York art dealer, became penpals relatively late in life, and their moving correspondence is included in John Russell's **Matisse: Father & Son** (Abrams)—a rich historical profile of both men and their close relationship. "What would become of me," Henri once wrote, "if you were no longer there?"

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Women:
Evolution & Revolution

THE WHOLE WOMAN

by Germaine Greer

Thirty years after *The Female Eunuch* galvanized the women's liberation movement, Greer launches a fiery sequel proclaiming that the time has come to get angry again. From the care of the body to the care of the household, from the workplace to the marketplace, she demonstrates that discrimination and exploitation persist in every area of life. Passionate and authoritative, *The Whole Woman* is a call to arms that is impossible to ignore.
(Knopf)

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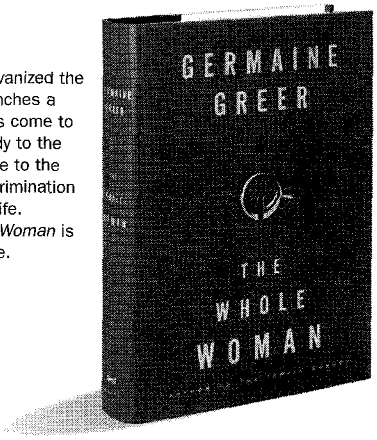
GERMAINE
GREER
THE
WHOLE
WOMAN

THE FIRST SEX

by Helen Fisher

Why is entrepreneurial America increasingly female? What impact are women having on the fields of entertainment, medicine and the law? Why are women better able to juggle many tasks at once? Drawing on original research, celebrated anthropologist Helen Fisher answers these and other intriguing questions. She reveals how women's natural talents are changing the world.
(Random House)

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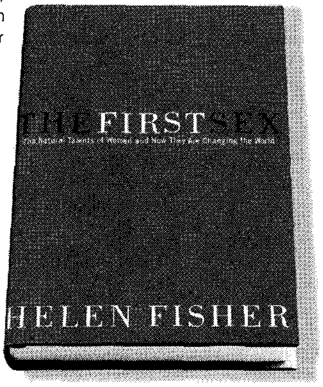
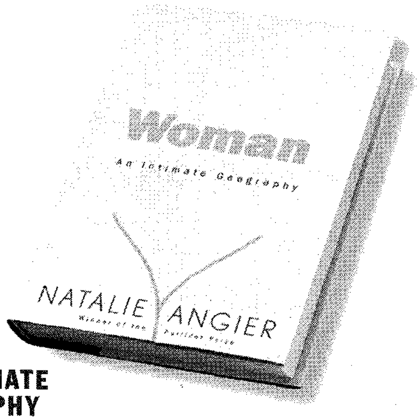

THE FIRST SEX
The Natural Talents of Women and How They Are Changing the World
HELEN FISHER


Woman
An Intimate Geography
NATALIE ANGIER
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

WOMAN: AN INTIMATE GEOGRAPHY

by Natalie Angier

With the wit, insight and sheer exuberance of language that make her one of the *New York Times'* premier reporters, Pulitzer Prize winner Natalie Angier explores that most enigmatic of evolutionary masterpieces: the female body. Through a combination of hard science and common sense, she creates a fresh, fully realized vision of womanhood. Gloria Steinem writes: "Anyone living in or near a female body should read this book."
(Houghton Mifflin)

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Prices effective at store locations through 6/30/99 certo Vocale and Collegium Vocale. June 10 and June 12 at 7:30: With baritone Simon Keenlyside in the title role. . . . ¶ June 11 at 7:30 and June 13 at 3: With tenor Carlo Allemano instead of Mr. Keenlyside. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. See also Dance.)

American Opera Chamber Company—Performing the première of Marjorie Rusche's "She Stoops to Conquer" (after Goldsmith's Restoration farce), on a double bill with Dominick Argento's "Postcard from Morocco." (St. Clement's Church, 423 W. 46th St. June 10-11 and June 14-15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "The Merry Widow," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. June 12 at 7:30 and June 13 at 2:30. Through June 20.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts Ravel's G-Major Piano Concerto (featuring Helen Huang) and Mahler's Symphony No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. June 10-12 at 8 and June 14 at 7:30.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir—JoAnn Rice leads works on Judaic themes by Hayes Biggs (a première), Leo Kraft, and Milhaud (selections from his "Service Sacré"). (German Church, 315 W. 22nd St. June 9 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Riverside Symphony—The Canadian pianist Richard Raymond enjoys a solid reputation in his native country, but an international career has proved elusive, partly because his playing offers purposeful seriousness rather than razzle-dazzle. In the end, he may be a musician's musician: certainly his competition awards, which include the Chamber Music Prize at the 1993 Van Cliburn Competition and second prize at the 1998 William Kapell Competition, confirm that he's worth seeking out. In this concert, he performs the Piano Concerto No. 2 (K. 39) by the eight-year-old Mozart, in addition to Schumann's Introduction and Allegro (Op. 134). Completing the program are Prokofiev's Sinfonietta and the première of Jonathan Harvey's "Tranquil Abiding." George Rothman conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. June 10 at 8.)

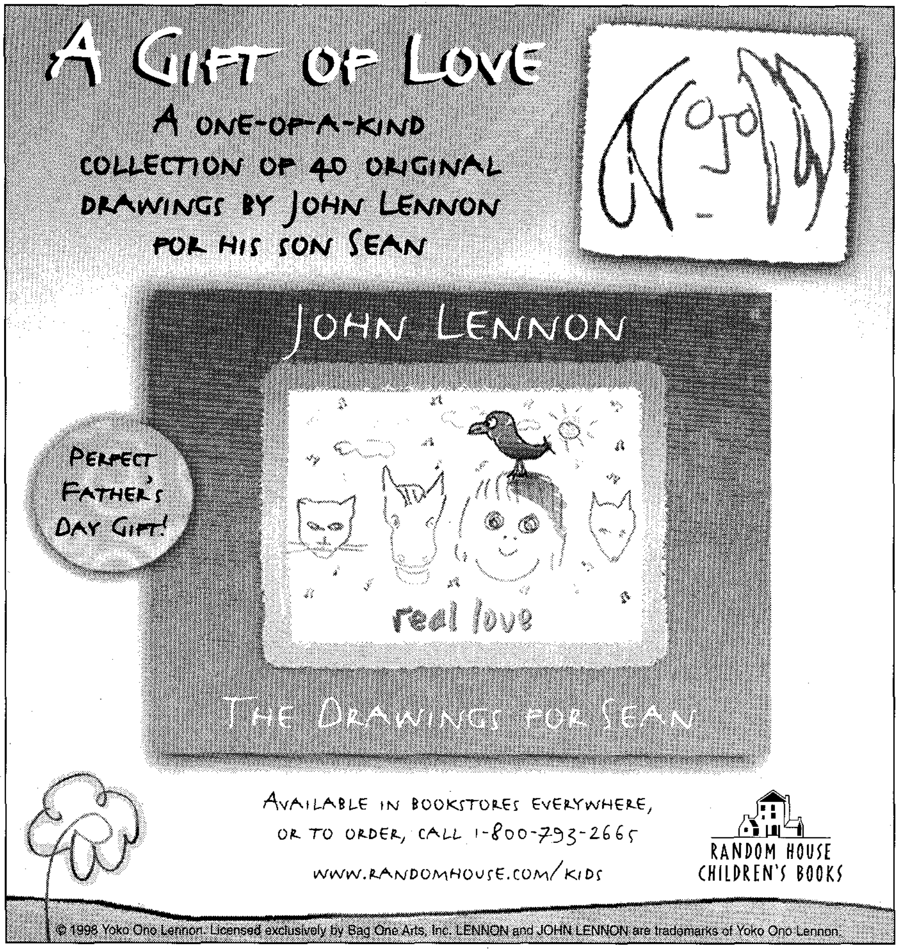
Bachanalia Chamber Orchestra—Performing works by Bach and Schnittke, among others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. June 11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 914-375-4676.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Performing five concerti grossi by Corelli. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. June 13 at noon.)

Rottenberg Chorale—Zalmen Mlotek leads Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms," as well as Baroque selections by Salomone Rossi, Yiddish folk songs, and modern American and Israeli compositions. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 13 at 7:30.)

New York Collegium—The period-instrument ensemble ends its season with a program of music by mid-Baroque masters: Heinrich Biber (his Requiem in F Minor), Georg Muffat (two sonatas from his "Armonico Tributo"), and Agostino Steffani (his "Stabat Mater"). Gustav Leonhardt conducts; the soloists are Susanne Ryden and Susanne Peck (sopranos), Dana Marsh (contralto), John Elwes and Marc Molomot (tenors), and Curtis Streetman (bass). (Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Ave., at 66th St. June 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 717-9246.)

Women's Choir of Reykjavík—A culture that exalts literature and the arts, a superb national network of conservatories, and an abundance of nearly endless winter nights in which to pursue rather few entertainment options have all contributed to the high level of music-making in Iceland. This seventy-voice ensemble, founded six years ago, appears this week in its first American tour, performing a program of choral pieces by Icelandic composers (including Páll Isólfsson, the nation's most internationally recognized twentieth-century musician), as well as arrangements of folk songs from Iceland, Sweden, Great Bri-



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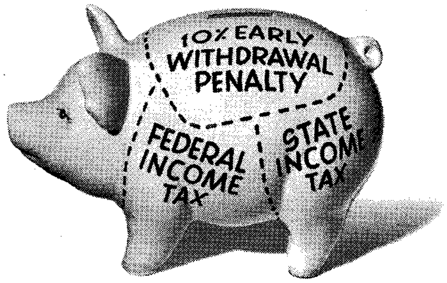

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tain, and the United States. Sigrún Thorgeirsdóttir directs, and soprano Sigrún Hjálmtyrsdóttir is the featured soloist. (Washington Square Methodist Church, 135 W. 4th St. June 15 at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

RECITALS

Lyric Chamber Music Society—Violinist Philip Quint, cellist Maria Kitsopoulos, and pianists David Korevaar and Joan Thomson Kretschmer collaborate in a recital that comprises Mozart's Violin Sonata in B-Flat Major (K. 454), Delius's Cello Sonata, and Ravel's "Miroirs" and Piano Trio. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. June 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

Friends and Enemies of New Music—Presenting mezzo-soprano Miriam Abramowitsch and baritone Chris Pedro Trakas in the premières of songs by Tom Cipullo and David Del Tredici (who will serve as the evening's pianists), as well as a song cycle by Chana Bloch. (Weill Recital Hall. June 9 at 8.)

Bargemusic—June 10 at 7:30: French hornist Eric Ruske is spotlighted in James Yannatos's "Simultaneous Contrasts" and Mozart's Horn Quintet. Also on the program is Mozart's supernal Divertimento in E-Flat Major for String Trio (K. 563). The concert's string players are Ani Kavafian (violin), Kerry McDermott (violin and viola), Paul Neubauer (viola), and Fred Sherry (cello). . . . ¶ June 11 at 7:30: Mr. Ruske, assisted by violinist Nai-Yuan Hu and pianist Philip Bush, performs Yannatos's "Simultaneous Contrasts," Mozart's Violin Sonata in B-Flat Major (K. 378, in a transcription for horn), and horn trios by Théodore Dubois and Brahms. . . . ¶ June 13 at 4: The two Mozart works as on June 10, but with Franz Anton Hoffmeister's Horn Quintet replacing the Yannatos piece. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

"Pushkin 200"—Music lovers have many reasons to celebrate Alexander Pushkin: Russian opera as we know it would be unrecognizable were it shorn of such Pushkin-based works as "Ruslan and Ludmila," "Boris Godunov," "Eugene Onegin," and "The Queen of Spades" (to cite a very short list). Several prominent Russian singers, including the soprano Stefka Evstatieva and the baritone Sergei Leiferkus, will be among the musicians, dancers, and actors (including Ralph Fiennes) who will gather to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of Pushkin's birth. (Carnegie Hall. June 12 at 7.)

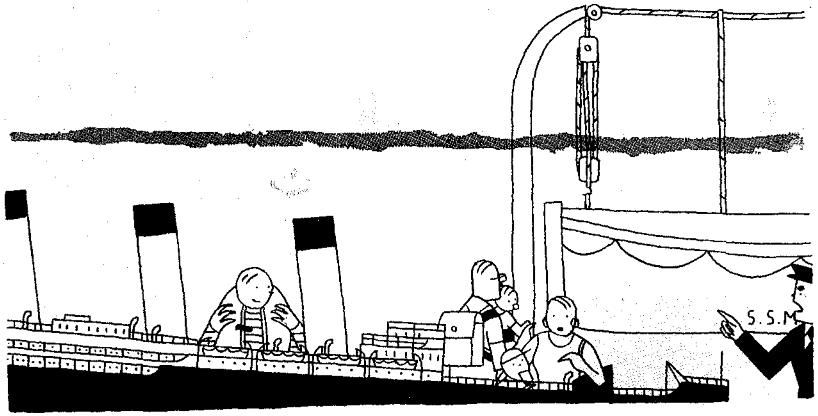
Prism Saxophone Quartet—The foursome offers works by Charles Wuorinen, Sofia Gubaidulina, and six other composers. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. June 13 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

Graz Gregorian Chant Schola: The fourteen-member ensemble interprets chant from tenth-century manuscripts. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. June 10 at 1. Admission by contribution.) . . . **American Composers Alliance:** New chamber works by seven composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. June 10 at 8.) . . . **Meng-Che Liu:** Piano works by Beethoven and Chopin. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. June 13 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Dreamboats—In the early part of the twentieth century, the fortunate few escaped the city's summer heat by boarding elegant ocean liners bound for Europe. You can get a feel for those cooler days in the air-conditioned quarters of the Federal Courthouse gallery, where the Ocean Liner Museum, an eighteen-year-old institution without a permanent home, has installed a temporary exhibit. "Blue Ribband: The Quest for Speed Across the Atlantic" is full of artifacts from record-holding liners as well as paintings and models of the fast ships, including the United States, which in 1952 set the still-standing record of three days, ten hours, and forty minutes for the trip from New York City to Southampton, England. (500 Pearl St., at Park Row. Open daily from 9 to 5. The exhibit runs through September.)



"Blue Ribband: The Quest for Speed Across the Atlantic," at the Ocean Liner Museum.

LAURENT CILLUFFO

Readings—June 8-10 and June 15-16 at 8: Anne Jackson, Keith David, Eli Wallach, and other actors present staged readings of the works of French dramatists Jean Giraudoux and Jean Anouilh. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. For more information, call 982-6782, ext. 30. Through June 30.) . . . ¶ June 10 at 6: By writers Louis Auchincloss and Richard Brookhiser and actress Celeste Holm, from the diaries of Philip Hone, George Templeton Strong, and Dawn Powell. (The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 122 E. 58th St. For reservations, which are required, call 360-1378.) . . . ¶ June 13 at 7: By Ernesto Mestre, from his novel "Lazarus Rumba"; A. M. Homes, from her novel "Music for Torching"; and Jill Ciment, from her novel "Teeth of the Dog." (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—June 8 at 7: *Parade* magazine editor Walter Anderson interviews former Senator Bill Bradley. (The New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ June 9 at 5:30: Art historian Juliet Wilson-Bareau discusses Manet's "Incident in a Bullfight," a painting displayed in the Salon of 1864 that the artist cut into two fragments—"Dead Toreador" and "Bullfight"—which are currently on display at the Frick Collection. (1 E. 70th St. 288-0700.) . . . ¶ June 10 at 7: As part of the selection process to come up with yet another hundred-best list, Allan Gurganus, Dorothy Allison, David Bergman, and other gay and lesbian writers consider "What is a lesbian or gay novel?," "What do we mean by best?," and other pertinent questions. (Mercantile Library, 17 E. 47th St. For reservations, which are required, call 755-6710.)

The Iceman Melteth.

A CHEQUE DRAWN ON THE BANK OF ICELAND accompanied by a request for six bottles of The Macallan Malt Whisky, started a *lively debate* at the Distillery the other day. Was it wise for these stern countrymen of ice and fire to seek out the mellow blandishments of The Macallan? That billowing sherry-oak redolence, with its hints of the *comfortable South*, should be treated with caution by the hardy sons of ERIK THE RED, argued our Moral Tutor. "A few sips could undo centuries of stoicism." But our Sales Director prevailed, and The Macallan was despatched the same evening. However, if you are planning a trip to Iceland, it might now be wise to include a paper hat and some streamers.

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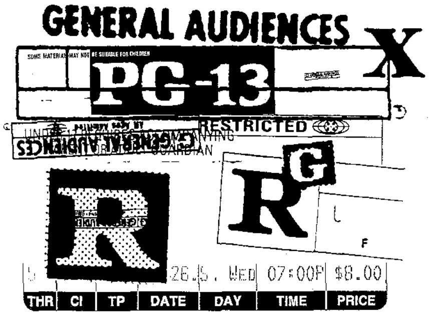


THE MOVIES

OPENING

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me—Mike Myers again plays the dual roles of the superspy from the sixties and Dr. Evil, in this film directed by Jay Roach. Opening June 11. (Cinema I, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Just a Little Harmless Sex—A romantic comedy, with Robert Mailhouse, Alison Eastwood, Jonathan Silverman, William Ragsdale, Rachel Hunter, Kimberly Williams, and Jessica Lundy; directed by Rick Rosenthal. Opening June 11. (Village East Cinemas.)

The Last Cigarette—A documentary look at smokers and the tobacco industry, directed by Kevin Rafferty and Frank Keraudren. Opening June 9. (Film Forum.)

Out of Season—A lesbian romance, directed by Jeannette Buck. Opening June 11. (Quad Cinema.)

The Red Violin—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 11. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Squre.)

Return with Honor—A documentary about P.O.W. pilots from the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Directed by Freida Lee Mock and Terry Sanders. Opening June 11. (Kips Bay Theatre.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

After Life—Newly dead people assemble in a kind of limbo (it looks like an old school) and are asked to choose a single memory of happiness. A celestial film crew then makes a movie of that moment, and the shade is allowed to live with the memory for all eternity. In this sombre, delicate Japanese fantasy, written and directed by Kore-eda Hirokazu (a former documentary-maker), the light is gray and even, the emotions tranquil, the politeness exquisite. Hirokazu has no interest in orgiasts or roller-coaster riders: the cherished moment, it turns out, may be nothing more than a passing mood of pleasure—a breeze felt at a window—or a pleasure given rather than one received. In Japanese.—*David Denby* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Cookie's Fortune—Robert Altman, in a benevolent mood, has made a lovely ensemble comedy from Anne Rapp's original screenplay about the fate of an inheritance—the house and jewels left behind by one Cookie Orcutt (Patricia Neal), a fine old lady in a small Mississippi town who misses her dead husband so much that she refuses to spend any more time away from him. Cookie's mad nieces (Glenn Close and Julianne Moore) rearrange the evidence of Cookie's suicide so that it looks like a murder, allowing suspicion to fall on a hard-drinking but amiable black man (Charles S. Dutton) who lives in Cookie's guest house. But the movie is not the usual protest against racism; on the contrary, the town works like the kind of happy, quarrelsome extended family in which people have put up with one another's foibles for years.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Dreamlife of Angels—Isa (Elodie Bouchez), a free spirit moseying around northern France with a rucksack, meets Marie (Natacha Régnier) in a clothing factory, and Marie offers her a place to stay. In a sense, Erick Zonca's first feature is little more than the brief history of their friendship; what fires it up, and takes it to the brink of greatness, is not only that the director registers every tremor of his heroines' competing emotions—the smiling blitheness of Isa, the inward fury of the beautiful Marie—but that the story travels so far. The film begins with a scuffed, documentary air that gradually deepens, almost without your noticing, into serene moments of epiphany. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (4/5/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Election—To become president of the high-school student body, Tracy Flick (Reese Witherspoon) gathers signatures, bakes cupcakes, and uses everyone; she's a cross between Pat and Richard Nixon. Her fair-minded teacher, Mr. McAllister (Matthew Broderick), develops a surprising obsession with Tracy—something about her bland dynamism aggravates his boredom with his own life, and he tries to stop Tracy cold. This remarkable satirical comedy, written by Jim Taylor and directed with deadpan cool by Alexander Payne, uses the school election as a prism for an analysis of success and failure in American life.—*D.D.* (4/26 & 5/3/99) (Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

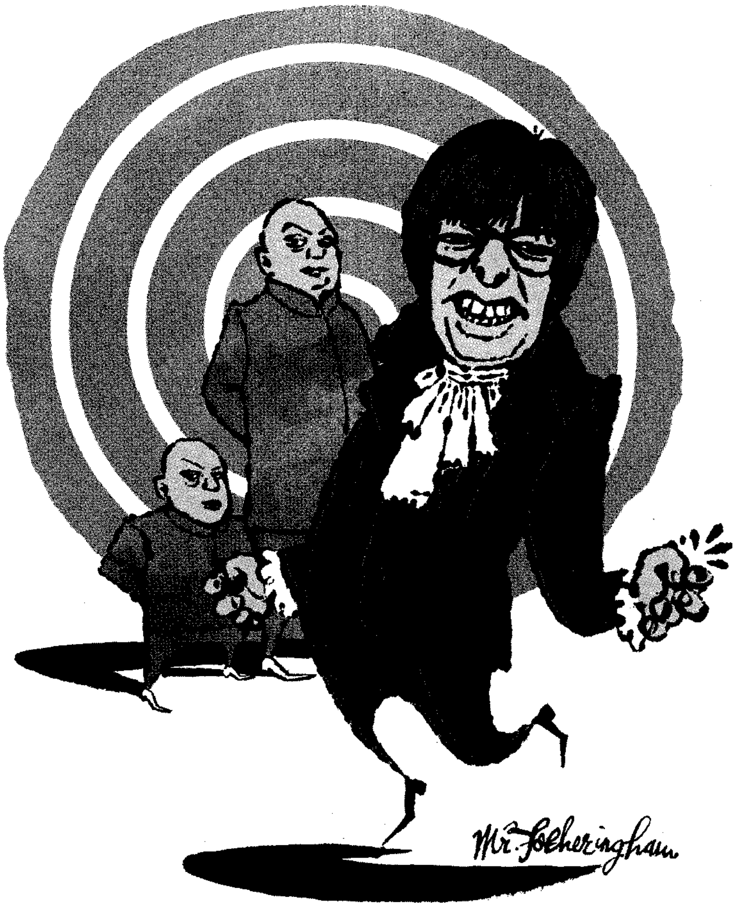
Entrapment—Jon Amiel's slack and predictable caper, with Sean Connery as a master thief and the gorgeous Catherine Zeta-Jones as an insurance investigator out to bring him down. The stars lack any sort of chemistry, which is too bad, since the script, by the always unreliable Ron Bass (with William Broyles), is intended as a romantic cat-and-mouse fantasy.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

eXistenZ—Once again, David Cronenberg uses a movie to play with our minds, and to make us feel disgusted about having a body. Jennifer Jason Leigh, in one of her more somnambulant moods, plays an interactive-game designer named Allegra, who is attacked while showing off her new creation, eXistenZ. From there on, she is guarded by the justifiably frightened Ted (Jude Law), whom she shyly introduces to the delights of her game. It doesn't look like a best-seller; once you're plugged in, all you appear to do is hang around in a game store and get your hands covered in blood at a virtual fish farm. Cronenberg is so busy plying his in-jokes and drilling his psychosexual meanings into the viewer's brain, or whatever organ takes his fancy, that he somehow neglects to tell a decent, entertaining story.—*A.L.* (5/10/99) (Village East Cinemas.)

Instinct—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, and Union Square.)

The Last Metro (1981)—François Truffaut's gratuitous apologia for the Parisians who continued to perform in the theatre under Nazi rule. Gérard Depardieu plays an anti-Fascist actor from the Grand Guignol, who is recruited to be the leading man in a troupe run by its leading lady, Catherine Deneuve—who is hiding her Jewish husband, the director (Heinz Bennent), in the company's basement. When a powerful critic and Nazi collaborator visits the stage, Depardieu stumbles backward like a gorilla rather than shake the man's hand, causing the critic to remark, "He'd be perfect as the Hairy Ape!" It's the one completely unexpected moment in this thin tribute to the show-must-go-on spirit. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; June 9-10.)

The Loss of Sexual Innocence—The new Mike Figgis film, his first feature since the glossy "One Night Stand," marks one of his irregular forays into dreamy experiment. In a loose way, it tells the story of Nic; we see him as a young boy in Africa, as an older boy back in England, as a sexually thwarted teen-ager (played by Jonathan Rhys-Meyers), and then as an adult (Julian Sands) who leaves his family and travels



Opening June 11, Mike Myers in "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me."

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

back to the desert. These fragmentary episodes are spliced with the story of Adam and Eve: a black man and a white woman rise naked from a lake and take it from there; in a bold departure, the role of the fateful apple is played by figs. These sequences badly skew the film—not because of explicitness but because their import is so obvious that it flattens the other narratives. There is much that is infuriating and pretentious here, but you can forgive Figgis almost anything, because his ambition allows him to stumble upon sights that no other director could envisage; the cheap, granular quality of the picture, with its hot, earthy colors, gets under your skin, and there is one section, entitled "Twins," that is the most haunting thing he has ever done. Two adult sisters who were separated at birth (both played wonderfully by Saffron Burrows) pass each other at an airport. The heartache of their near-miss needs a whole movie to itself.—*A.L.* (Angelika Film Center.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Kevin Kline does his best movie work yet as Nick Bottom, the weaver and amateur actor, who gets "translated" into an ass and then enjoys the infatuated caresses of Titania (Michelle Pfeiffer), the deluded queen of the fairies. Chest hair aroused, donkey teeth protruding, Kline luxuriates gloriously in Pfeiffer's arms. But in most other ways this "Midsummer Night" is hard to endure. Director Michael Hoffman has transferred the setting from Shakespeare's ancient, myth-haunted Athens to the Tuscany of 1900; the production is sunshiny, lavish, and busy, but to no particular purpose, and the Italian opera that Hoffman pours on is too openly emotional for the play's delicate madness.—*D.D.* (5/17/99) (East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Showplace, and Union Square.)

The Mummy—In the nineteen-twenties, in a fabled city in the sands of Egypt, in a hidden tomb, a beefy American adventurer named O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) goes looking for buried treasure. With him are a studious but sultry librarian (Rachel Weisz) and her dim but cowardly brother (John Hannah). We already know that the tomb is booby-trapped by all manner of ancient curses, and, soon enough, the massed ranks of special effects arrive to take revenge. Stephen Sommers's movie has the courage of its own clichés; he piles the silliness on with such speed that you don't have the time to notice how dead and dusty most of his themes are. Fraser, however, successfully demonstrates how to be lusty and affable at the same time.—*A.L.* (5/10/99) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly. . . . ¶ Beekman; through June 10.)

Notting Hill—The first outing for screenwriter Richard Curtis and leading man Hugh Grant since their collaboration on "Four Weddings and a Funeral." The new movie is less inclined to tomfoolery; the gags are quieter and more sparsely planted. Grant plays a London bookseller named William Thacker; Julia Roberts plays Anna Scott, a movie star who wanders into his store. The two of them fall in love, then out of love, and so on; you feel lulled rather than excited by the sway of the plot, and Curtis's essentially benign attitude—most of the characters are charming but screwy, and they get along just fine—seems to tame the director, Roger Michell. The scene in which William crashes a press junket is a convincing vision of media hell, but the other pokes at celebrity are halfhearted; the problem is that Anna, who should be softening from goddess into human being, never really melts—she remains trapped in icy fame, and you can't believe that William and she would make a lasting pair. Still, there are plenty of incidental pleasures; some of the supporting players—especially Tim McInnerny as a lousy cook and Rhys Ifans as a scrofulous Welshman—threaten to steal the picture.—*A.L.* (6/7/99) (Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Rapture (1991)—The satiric, the diabolic, and the messianic meet—unfortunately, not for long—in Michael Tolkin's audacious début as a writer-director. The queasy-funny bits come at the beginning; Mimi Rogers plays a swinging Southern California phone operator, and at one point a visiting orgiast makes a toast "to open-minded people and L.A., my kind of town." But when Rogers starts feeling empty, seeks spiritual solace, and is "saved," Tolkin puts her through a cataclysmic crisis of faith—a journey that we must also take on faith. The material derives from the Book of Revelations, but the combination of picturesque profundity and a booby-trapped plot plays out like the unholy marriage of Ingmar Bergman and Rod Serling.—*M.S.* (Anthology Film Archives; June 11-13.)

Savage Nights (1993)—This is the story of Jean, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, caught between the opposing charms of Laura (Romane Bohringer) and Samy (Carlos López). He is played by Cyril Collard, a young French bisexual filmmaker with AIDS, who also directed the movie and wrote the screenplay, based on his own novel. The personal intensity of the project, sadly, does not end there: Collard died in March, 1993, three days after his work won four César awards, including the prize for best film. Bearing this in mind, it is hard to confront the film with a clear eye, but what one sees is vigorous, wordy, and broken-backed. When Laura learns of Jean's condition, she throws a fit and then takes off his condom, wanting to prove her love with perilous sex. It's that old French refrain—the dark poetry of the death wish—and the best scenes consist simply of the hero gunning his red sports car through the night. But the movie disintegrates badly, and loses force; the characters seem not so much to be living through their experiences as using them to strike philosophical poses. In French.—*A.L.* (Anthology Film Archives; June 10 and June 12-13.)

Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace—It has been more than twenty years since George Lucas directed a movie. Amid the fuss that has attended his return to the fray, no one seems to have wondered whether he was up to the task. With this film, Lucas demonstrates two facts: one, that he has kept abreast of the recent leaps in special effects, and two, that he hasn't a clue what to do with all the nondigital figures, otherwise known as "people." Three fine actors were lured into this farrago: Ewan McGregor plays the young Obi-Wan Kenobi, Liam Neeson is his Jedi mentor, Natalie Portman plays a teen-age queen, and all of them look as if they were recently abused by robots.—*A.L.* (5/24/99) (East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

Three Seasons—The début film of the Vietnamese-American director Tony Bui, in which the lives of several people in Ho Chi Minh City—a cyclo driver, a prostitute, a middle-aged G.I., a young woman, and a street kid—are woven into a composite picture of life after the war. The movie substitutes sensitivity for drama; it's a little too high-minded. But the cinematography (by Lisa Rinzler) is lustrously beautiful, and the editing is very fine. With Harvey Keitel as the American; the accomplished Vietnamese actors include Don Duong, Zoë Bui, and Nguyen Ngoc Hiep. In Vietnamese.—*D.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

A Walk on the Moon—In a clannish Catskills bungalow colony, in the summer of 1969—Woodstock summer—Pearl (Diane Lane), a bored young Jewish housewife and mother, becomes convinced that she's lost a decade to mah-jongg and Waldbaum's and begins an affair with a handsome Gentile stranger (Viggo Mortensen) who's passing through. Her hardworking husband (Liev Schreiber),

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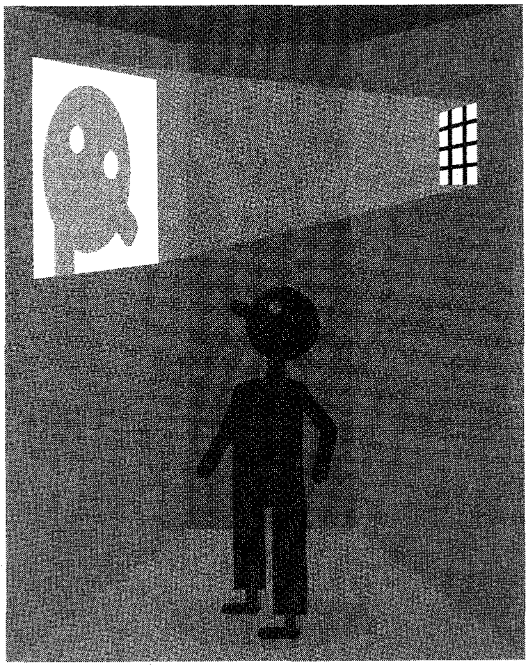

Starting June 11 at the Walter Reade Theatre, the 1999 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

CHRISTOPH NEIMANN

who was never told that sensuality should be part of a man's equipment, is appalled and fights back. In form, the movie is perhaps no more than a conventional triangle drama, but the milieu lends the material a special charm and interest. The actor Tony Goldwyn, directing his first movie, and working from a fine screenplay by Pamela Gray, beautifully captures a moment in which the straitened moral world of the lower-middle-class Jewish characters is beginning to open up—with necessarily painful results.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, Gotham Cinema, and Union Square.)

The Winslow Boy—Before the First World War, an English naval cadet, accused of forging and cashing a five-shilling postal order, is expelled from school. His father (Nigel Hawthorne) believes him innocent and empties the family coffers in an attempt to clear the boy's name. David Mamet has adapted and directed Terence Rattigan's 1946 play, which was based on a true story, with a fidelity so profound that one doesn't know whether to be amazed or depressed by it. The movie concentrates on the intense self-control of the boy's upper-middle-class family. Every scene is a tense struggle between anger and reticence, between love and self-suppression, and after a while the entire enterprise seems slightly mad. Is British reserve really such a superb moral achievement? With Rebecca Pidgeon and Jeremy Northam.—*D.D.* (5/17/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANALYZE THIS: Cinema II. . . . **BESIEGED:** Angelika Film Center and Paris. . . . **BLACK MASK:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **DESERT BLUE:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **EDGE OF SEVENTEEN:** Quad Cinema. . . . **ETERNITY AND A DAY:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **FINDING NORTH:** Quad Cinema. . . . **GET REAL:** State and Village East Cinemas. . . . **GO** (reviewed in our issue of 4/19/99): The Screening Room. . . . **HIDEOUS KINKY:** Art Greenwich Twin. . . . **THE KING OF MASKS:** Cinema Village. . . . **LEILA:** Cinema Village. . . . **LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL** (11/16/98 and 3/15/99): 59th Street East Cinema and Guild. . . . **LIMBO:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square. . . . **THE LOVE LETTER:** BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE MATRIX** (4/26 & 5/3/99): Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Union Square. . . . **OPEN YOUR EYES:** Cinema Village. . . . **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (12/21/98): Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Waverly. . . . **TEA WITH MUSSOLINI:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square. . . . **THE THIRD MAN** (1949): Film Forum. . . . **THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THIS IS MY FATHER:** First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **TRIPPIN':** Criterion Center. . . . **TWICE UPON A YESTERDAY:** BAM Rose Cinemas and Union Square. . . . **XIU XIU: THE SENT DOWN GIRL:** Eastside Playhouse and Village East Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films directed by François Truffaut; in French, with English subtitles. June 9-10: "The Last Metro" (†). . . . June 11-12: "The Bride Wore Black" (1968). . . . June 13: "Love on the Run" (1979). . . . June 15: "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977). . . . ¶ Films by Harold Lloyd. June 14: "Hot Water" (1924) and "Feet First" (1930).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films directed by Alfred Hitchcock. June 11 at 2 and June 13 at 5: "Topaz" (1969). . . . June 11 at 6 and June 14 at 2:30: "Torn Curtain" (1966). . . . June 11 at 8:30 and June 12 at 2: "Marnie" (1964). . . . June 12 at 5 and June 14 at 6: "Frenzy" (1972). . . . June 13 at 2 and June 15 at 6: "Family Plot" (1976). . . . ¶ June 12 at 1: "Four Little Girls" (1997, Spike Lee).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of Irish films. June 9 at 1 and 5:15: Three short films—"Stranded" (1998, Ian Fitzgibbon), "Boys and Men" (1996, Seán Hinds), and "Navigatio: Atlantean II" (1998, Bob Quinn). . . . June 9 at 3:30 and 7:45 and June 10 at 1: "The Fifth Province" (1997, Frank Stapleton). . . . June 10 at 4: "Frankie Starlight" (1996, Michael Lindsay-Hogg). . . . ¶ June 10 at 6:30: "Return with Honor" (1998, Freida Lee Mock and Terry Sanders). . . . ¶ From June 11: The 1999 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—June 12 at 2: "The Lamb" (1915, D. W. Griffith and William Christy Cabanne; silent), with Douglas Fairbanks. . . . June 12 at 4:30: "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1920, John S. Robertson; silent), with John Barrymore. . . . June 13 at 2:30: "The Sheik" (1921, George Melford; silent), with Rudolph Valentino. . . . June 13 at 5: "He Who Gets Slapped" (1924, Victor Sjöström; silent), with Lon Chaney.

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films featuring Marcello Mastroianni. June 15 at 7: "Intervista" (1987, Federico Fellini; in Italian). . . . June 15 at 9: "8½" (1963, Fellini; in Italian).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—June 15 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "La Sentinelle" (1992, Arnaud Desplechin; in French).

Bryant Park, *Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays,* starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with coming attractions, trailers, and cartoons. The feature on June 14 will be "Cabaret" (1972, Bob Fosse). (For rain-date information, call 512-5700.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On June 13 at 7, the feature will be "The Boys in the Band" (1970, William Friedkin).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—June 10 at 7:30, June 12 at 3, and June 13 at 9:30: "Savage Nights" (†). . . . June 10 at 7 and 9, June 11 at 9:30, June 12 at 4:30, and June 13 at 5: "Flamenco Women" (1997) and "Just Dancing Around" (1995), both directed by Mike Figgis. . . . June 10 at 10, June 12 at 7:30, and June 13 at 5:30: "Thérèse" (1986, Alan Cavalier; in French). . . . June 11 at 8, June 12 at 9:30, and June 13 at 3: "The Boy Who Cried Bitch" (1991, Juan José Campanella). . . . June 11 at 10:15, June 12 at 5:30, and June 13 at 7:30: "The Rapture" (†).

The 11th Annual New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival—Through June 13: Full-length features and documentaries and short films will be shown at the New School (66 W. 12th St.), at Cinema Village (22 E. 12th St.), and at the N.Y.U. Cantor Film Center (36 E. 8th St.). (For information about schedules and films, call 254-8504.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Someday, all this will be yours.

JUST at the moment when the mother country is coming around to the realization that the hereditary principle is a deeply silly way to choose a government, her big galumphing son seems to have decided that it's the only way to go. Over there, Tony Blair's team of groovy reformers is gleefully giving the hook to the six-hundred-plus dukes, earls, countesses, barons, and other winners in the lottery of birth who currently hold a majority of the seats in the upper house of Britain's national legislature. (The monarchy itself is being left alone, at least for now.)

Over here, the stampede is in the opposite direction. The all but prohibitive favorite for the Democratic Presidential nomination, Albert Gore, Jr., is the son of the late Albert Gore, Sr., a Senate grandee. The all but prohibitive favorite for the Republican Presidential nomination, George W. Bush, is the son of—well, you know very well whom he's the son of. The two other more or less plausible Republican candidates are also legacy cases. John S. McCain, the Arizona senator, is the son; John S. McCain, the highly political four-star admiral and commander of American forces in the Pacific during the Vietnam War, was the father. Elizabeth Dole, candidate for First Lady last time out, is the aisle-wandering wife; Bob Dole, candidate for First Gentleman this time out, is the Viagra-popping husband.

Our alleged republic has never had a problem with the hereditary principle, except in principle. As for the practice, it goes way back—before the Kennedys, before the Tafts, before the Roosevelts. If George W. ends up President, he won't be the first whose dad got to the White House before him. He won't even be the first whose dad, having got there, was turned out four years later by a Southern Democrat who (a) went on to win a second term and (b) has recently been in the news on account of highly sensational, vehemently denied, and, in the end, DNA-confirmed sexual peccadilloes. That honor belongs to John Quincy Adams. Political power has been treated as an heirloom ever since. Among Stevensons, for example, Adlai I was Vice-President of the United States, Adlai II governor of Illinois and twice the Democratic Presidential nominee, and Adlai III senator from Illinois. When Ted Kennedy—son of the Ambassador, brother of the President, brother of the Attorney General—first ran for senator, in 1962, his opponents were Eddie McCormack, nephew of a Speaker of the House; George Cabot Lodge, son of one senator and grandson of another; and H. Stuart Hughes, grandson of the 1916 Republican Presidential nominee, later Chief Justice of the United States. And let's not even mention the Bayhs, the Byrds, the Daleys, the La Follettes, the Longs, the Rockefellers, and the Wagners.

To be sure, being a son-of—or a daughter-of, like former Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum (whose father, Alf Landon, was governor of Kansas and F.D.R.'s Republican challenger in 1936, and whose second husband, Howard Baker, became the Republican leader of the Senate partly because his first wife was the daughter of Everett Dirksen, the Republican leader of the Senate)—does not necessarily make a politician less able or less original than one who succeeds purely on his or her own. On the contrary, political talent runs in families. And a legacy politician can get away with being unconventional—witness the career of the current mayor of Oakland, the former California governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., son of the former California governor Edmund G. Brown, Sr. A like pattern obtains in a related field, the movies, where the most interesting stars are, in wildly disproportionate numbers, sons-of and daughters-of: Drew Barrymore, Jeff Bridges, Laura Dern, Michael Douglas, Robert Downey, Jr., Mia Farrow, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sean Penn, Isabella Rossellini, Liv Tyler, and Jane, Peter, and Bridget Fonda, to name only a few.

A certain amount of dynastic drift is only natural. What's new about this year's political heirship is its ubiquity. When the hereditary principle becomes more the rule than the exception, as has happened in the current political season, one has to wonder if the decadence isn't reaching alarming proportions. Our system of nominating and electing Presidents, never a model of coherent deliberation to begin with, has lately got so sluggish, expensive, lethal, and front-loaded that a can-

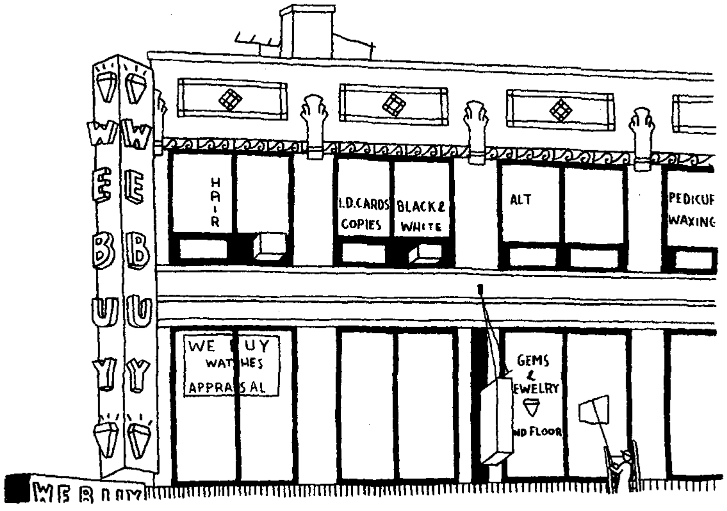


ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT CILLUFFO

didate who is not, to one degree or another, the American equivalent of a hereditary peer is as rare as an old, fat anchorwoman. Without the leg up provided by a family that is famous, well connected, and, if at all possible, enormously but unobtrusively rich, a politician is just another clammy job-seeker pressing résumés on strangers. (Even the nonhereditary candidates tend increasingly to be people whose initial fame was won in some branch of show business, like Bill Bradley and Ronald Reagan—the American equivalents of life peers.) Could a commoner like Lincoln or Truman get elected today? Maybe, but, like the incumbent plebeian President, not without an awful lot of fund-raising and triangulating. Persons wishing to do something about this state of affairs are urged to get in touch with their local Lord or Lady. —HENDRIK HERTZBERG

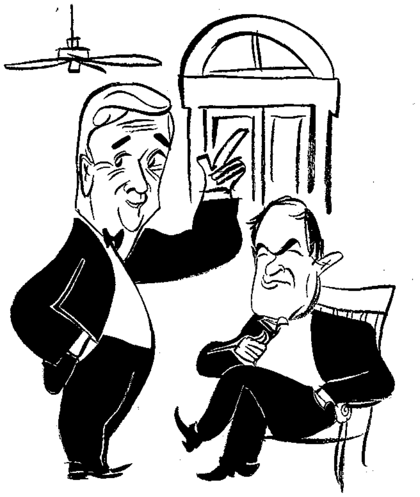
THE BOARDS

To the theatre crowd, a lawyer more popular than Ally McBeal.

WITH the possible exception of a larger dressing room, nothing has proved more seductive to American actors of a certain age than the chance to play Clarence Darrow. His appeal endures, perhaps because he was a tireless champion of the underdog at the center of so many historic trials; or maybe because any actor who plays him gets to make a lot of really, really long speeches. Whatever the reason, in a nation that often complains that there are too many lawyers, there always seems to be a surplus of Darrows.

Over the years, a number of Hollywood stars have strapped on Darrow's suspenders, most memorably Spencer Tracy, who portrayed a Darrow-like character in the 1960 film "Inherit the Wind," and Henry Fonda, who appeared on Broadway in the one-man show "Clarence Darrow" in 1974. Now, in what amounts to a live-action version of MTV's "Celebrity Deathmatch," two more actors are vying for the right to inherit the windbag: Leslie Nielsen and Laurence Luckinbill.

Nielsen, who became famous for his deadpan delivery of lines like "Don't call me Shirley" in the movie "Airplane!," would seem unlikely casting for the lawyer who defended Leopold and Loeb, but not to his Hollywood publicist, David Kramer. "Leslie is a true Darrowphile," Kramer said over the telephone the other day. "He's submerged himself in Darrowiana." The submersion process has included reading Irving Stone's biography of Darrow, visiting Darrow's home town of Kinsman, Ohio, and buying the rights to the script that Henry Fonda performed, written by David Rintels. Nielsen, who is described in an L.A. *Times* quote on his "Darrow" press release as the "Chaplin of the gross-out genre," has taken his "Darrow" show on the road, drawing crowds from New Brunswick to San Luis Obispo. He plans to bring it to Broadway early next year, with Don Gregory, the man who put together the original Henry Fonda production, on board again as producer.



Leslie Nielsen and Laurence Luckinbill

When Fonda played the Helen Hayes Theatre twenty-five years ago, Gregory had no way of knowing that there was yet another future Darrow in the audience: the stage and television actor Laurence Luckinbill. Luckinbill recalls that he was there in part because of a connection to the Fonda family: "Jane and I happened to have the same lawyer." Now he is playing the same lawyer as Jane's dad, but with a different script. Although Luckinbill was impressed by Fonda's performance, he was less enthralled by Rintels' play. "It was a definite artifact of the seventies," he says of the property that is now owned by Leslie Nielsen. "It had a lot of sixties concerns." Luckinbill, a Darrowphile in his own right, mined the original trial transcripts of Darrow's most famous cases and wrote his own one-man show, "Clarence Darrow Tonight"—not to be confused with Hal Holbrook's one-man show, "Mark Twain Tonight!"

Most of the famous Darrow trials feature a surprising victory for the underdog, and the case of Darrow v. Darrow is no exception: donning the suspenders at the tiny Ensemble Studio Theatre, Luckinbill was well reviewed in the *Times* and, in April, received a nomination for a Drama Desk Award—the same award Henry Fonda received twenty-five years ago. Although he says he is honored by the recognition, Luckinbill is most passionate about the work itself. "I have a deep belief in the art of the theatre," he said the other day. "I know it works to save civilizations." Acknowledging that Leslie Nielsen was able to mount a national tour "because he's a movie name," Luckinbill admitted that he would like to obtain a larger venue for his Darrow. But so far, he said, "no one has offered."

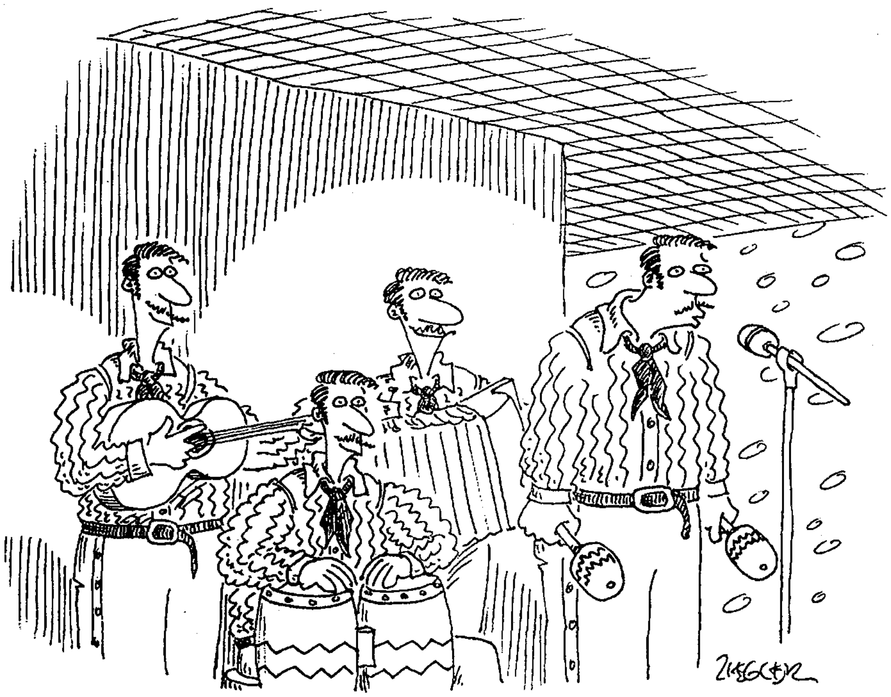
If Luckinbill succeeds in finding that venue, and if Nielsen touches down on Broadway next March, as planned, New York may have an embarrassment of Darrows. In a city that thrives on rivalries, like Yankees-Mets, Knicks-Nets, and Giuliani-Clinton, which Darrow will be left standing? Perhaps New Yorkers will choose not to choose, opting instead for Darrow No. 3: Jack Lemmon, who is currently reprising Spencer Tracy's role in a television remake of "Inherit the Wind." But, if such a rivalry does emerge, Luckinbill is not likely to blink. "The purpose of New York is to hone the arts by inspiring artists to compete with each other," he said. "I hope it continues to be that kind of Olympic competition." Surely Luckinbill must have some opinion on how Nielsen's Darrow might stack up against his own. "My lips are sealed," he said. "And don't call me Shirley." —ANDY BOROWITZ

SLIGHT HEADACHE DEPT.

The art museum that saved—and stumped—a town.

ON the day that the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, in North Adams, finally opened, there was a long line of people waiting to get into Bruce Nauman's "Yellow

Room (Triangular)." The "room" had been conceived in 1973, when Nauman was experimenting with what he has called "really uncomfortable, disorienting kinds of spaces," and in a sense he couldn't have had a more responsive audience.



"A lot of you used to know us as the L.A. Punksters. Then for a while we were the Rappin' Rapmen. Now we call ourselves Los Latinos del Momento."

• •

MASS MoCA, billed as the "largest center for contemporary arts in the United States," is housed in the ruins of a sprawling electronics factory that had itself been created out of a defunct ninteenth-century textile mill. In each of its earlier incarnations, the complex was the city's main employer, and when Sprague Electric shuttered it, in 1986, roughly a quarter of the city's workforce lost their jobs. Since last week's opening, which was free, drew mostly residents of North Adams and surrounding towns, the crowd was made up largely of people whose lives had—for better and, to a greater extent, for worse—been tied up in the vast brick buildings.

The museum's founding director, Joe Thompson, has described MASS MoCA as, among other things, "an open platform that fosters a dynamic dialogue between artist, artwork, place and visitor," and as a "cross-disciplinary institution that multiplies the possibilities for contemporary art-making and presentation." But, from the moment the idea of converting the factory into a museum was first proposed, more than a dozen years ago, city residents were clear about exactly what they did—and did not—see in the project. "McDonald's and Burger King can only hire so many people," Evelyn Jones, a onetime union leader at Sprague, told the North Adams *Transcript,* which had printed a special "souvenir edition" in honor of the opening. Even at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the city's mayor, John Barrett III, surrounded by the men and women who had designed MASS MoCA, went out of his way to assure his constituents that he really couldn't care less about what was inside the place. "I warned you about the art," he said, before reiterating his oft-stated opinion that it wasn't worth walking "across the street to see."

In addition to Nauman's experiments with space, the opening exhibits include a thousand-foot-long work in progress by Robert Rauschenberg, ambitiously titled "The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece," which takes up a gallery the length of a football field. A large room is devoted to Joseph Beuys's "Lightning with Stag in Its Glare," a tremendous metal spike surrounded by pieces of bronze that look more or less turd-shaped. Another huge space is given over to a set of igloolike structures by Mario Merz. All told, the museum has nineteen galleries covering more than a hundred thousand square feet.

The mood of the crowd as it streamed into the museum, past a group of six trees hung upside down by Natalie Jeremijenko, could perhaps have been best described as festively incredulous. In almost every gallery, one could hear variations on the same theme. Surveying the twisted-metal sculptures by John Chamberlain, one elderly woman speculated, "If you wrecked your car, you could have the same thing." A man declared loudly, "There should be a guide to tell us what the hell this is all about." Inside Nauman's "Yellow Room," a triangular space lit with yellow neon, reactions ranged from embarrassed giggles to constructive suggestions ("Maybe if they painted it . . . ") and blunt queries ("What are we doing here?").

The museum's designers have tried hard to incorporate bits of North Adams's past into MASS MoCA's futuristic look, as if to bolster their claim that the city, done in by the collapse of industry, can now be saved by joining the postindustrial age. In this spirit, they have embraced a motto popularized by a local ad campaign—"Infinite Capacity." The phrase at once recalls the millions of capacitors Sprague produced and presents an irony that the factory's former employees can surely appreciate just as much as, if not more than, the SoHo crowd MASS MoCA hopes to attract. A capacitor, after all, is just two sheets of metal with filler in between.

—ELIZABETH KOLBERT

DEPT. OF TOURIST EDUCATION

Making slavery palatable to the Bermuda-shorts set.

PHILIP CANADY, a historical interpreter in Jamestown, Virginia, was talking about slavery to a group of tourists recently when one man interrupted, "I didn't come to Jamestown to hear about black people!"

Canady, who is black, took a deep breath and continued his talk, mentioning that the first Africans sold in Colonial America arrived in Jamestown in 1619. "I guess this guy thought the Jamestown story was just John Smith and

Pocahontas," Canady says. "Everyone's looking for a comfort zone when it comes to our history, but with slavery there isn't one."

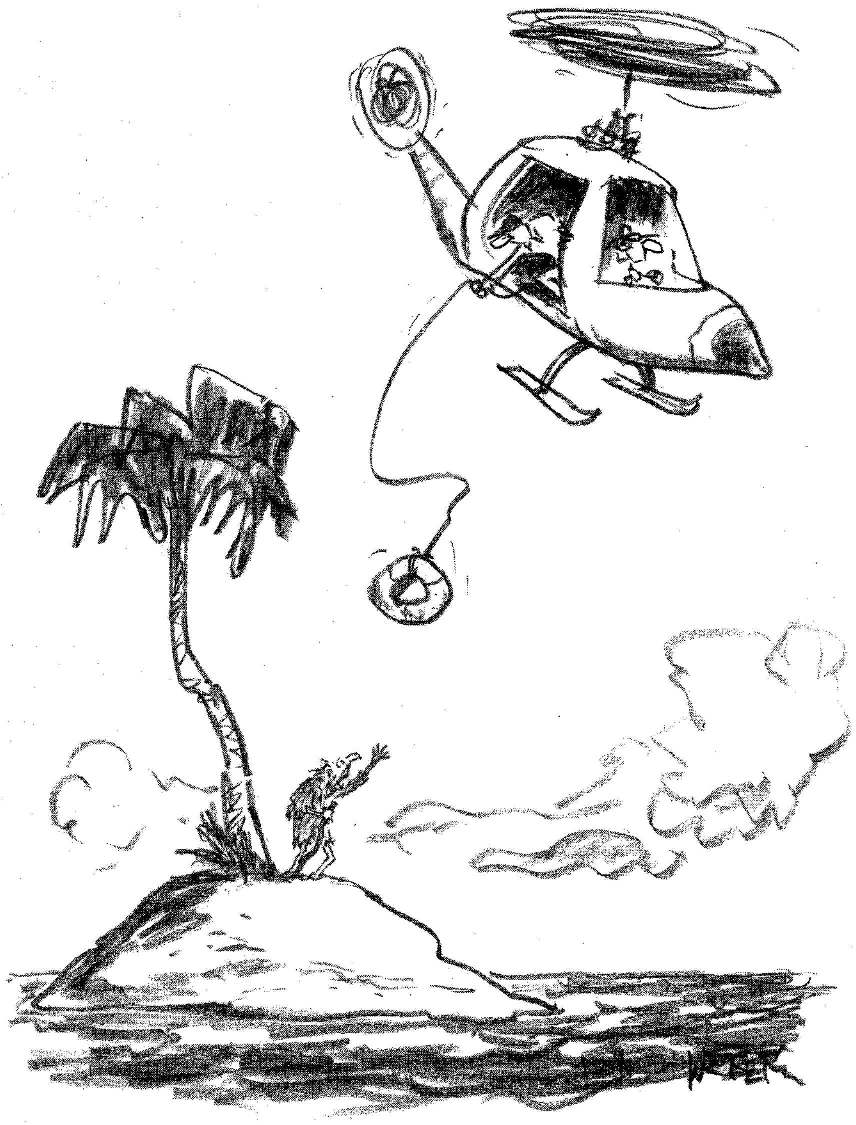
Canady shared his experience with other historical interpreters at an unusual workshop held last month in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, the site of John Brown's famous raid to arm and free slaves, in 1859. Sponsored by the National Park Service and New York's Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the seminar coaches those on the front lines of the national conversation on race in how to handle the ignorance and discomfort they so often encounter. This is a particular challenge in summer, when vacationing visitors want to enjoy themselves as well as be educated.

"Most Americans have this peculiar need to be pleased by their past," said David Blight, one of the seminar's two instructors. "The Russians need to hurt from their history. Not us. But our past is like everybody else's—it's full of tragedy."

Blight, a professor of history and Black Studies at Amherst College, cuts a Lincolnesque figure: he is tall, angular, bearded, Midwestern. His colleague, James Horton, is a history and American Studies professor at George Washington University and a member of Monticello's African-American advisory board. "People always say to me, 'Stop talking about slavery—it's too painful,' " Horton told the class. "If you think it's painful for us to talk about slavery, how about the millions who lived it?"

Blight and Horton gave their students—guides at battlefields, plantations, historic homes, and other sites—a two-day crash course on slavery and abolition, and suggested stories that might help enliven and humanize the subject, such as the tale of Henry (Box) Brown, a Richmond slave who escaped to Philadelphia by shipping himself inside a shoemaker's crate. The Underground Railroad is another popular, if misunderstood, subject. Tourists often ask guides if tunnels under their houses could have been used by fugitive slaves. (The Railroad was an informal network, not a subterranean route.) "When we think of slavery, we usually think of people who were victimized and the people who victimized them," Horton said. "But with the Underground Railroad you have a real Hollywood story. Everyone gets to be a hero."

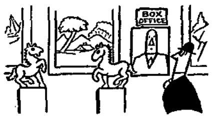
The professors also talked bluntly about issues such as the need to use plain language rather than the euphemisms that have clouded slavery since antebellum Southerners began referring to it as their "peculiar institution." "Ten years ago at Monticello, guides never said 'slave,' " Horton said. "They talked about Jefferson's 'servants.' Now, today, a lot of blacks feel we shouldn't use the term 'slave.' We should talk about 'enslaved people,' which they think is somehow less shameful. But that's prettifying slavery in the same way slaveholders did when they referred to 'my family' or 'my people.' Slavery wasn't a part-time job. It was a full-time thing, and we have to face its ugliness squarely." Horton is also impatient with whites who think slavery isn't part of their history because their forebears arrived in America after the Civil War. "If you're American, you have rights to all the things we're proud of. That's part of your American heritage. But you have to inherit the bad things, too. And there's a debt that comes with that inheritance which we're still trying to repay." —Tony Horwitz



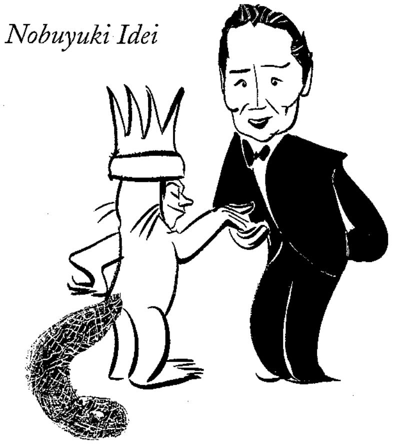
"Forget about me—save Social Security."

FAX FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Sony puts the finishing touches on a high-tech pleasure dome.



San Francisco, which seems to have the U.S.A.'s tidiest homes and garages, the fewest potholes, the freshest salads, and the most communal enthusiasm for projects, plans next week to open Metreon, the biggest city-contained entertainment center in the world. The eighty-five-million-dollar complex, which was developed by Sony, will have fifteen theatres, an Imax screen, and what must surely be the world's longest and shiniest popcorn counter. Trying to outdo the locally beloved Exploratorium (and Disney World, too, it seems), the center will have a children's play area inspired by Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" and an interactive attraction based on "The Way Things Work," by David Macaulay. Then there are six shops (including the first Microsoft store), eight restaurants, and the Airtight Garage, an "adventure zone" with oversized computer games that have names like "Badlands" and "HyperBowl."


Nobuyuki Idei

With about a month to go before Metreon's opening, the countdown clock in the office of the planners read, "26 days 16 hours 16 seconds." A "Quote of the Day" was posted: "If you don't scale the mountain, you can't see the view." Having emerged from their cubicles, clusters of young organizers were dealing with opening-day questions: Should there be an actual ribbon-cutting? (No.) Daytime fireworks? (Yes.) Five hundred racing pigeons to be released to circle the building? (Yes.) A class of preschool kids from the nearby Filipino Education Center to escort Mr. Nobuyuki Idei, Sony's Tokyo-based president and co-chief executive officer, into the building? (Yes.)

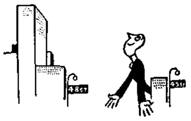
A few other questions: Was Mr. Idei's boss, Mr. Norio Ohga, Sony's chairman and C.E.O., coming from Tokyo? (Not until July.) Anything special about July? (Sony dealers from all over the world will be coming to San Francisco for a three-day Global Marketing Partners Conference.) Was Mr. Ohga excited about Metreon? (Definitely. Mr. Ohga—who is said to be "more emotional" than Mr. Idei—is especially happy about the Where the Wild Things Are attraction, because he has a soft spot for Sendak's character Max.)

On the site itself, various Sony "Development" and "Operational" and "Managerial" executives wearing ID tags and hard hats were busy reminding workers that their motto was "Just Finish!" and that their maxim was "At this point, the enemy of good ideas is better ideas!" Someone noticed that a robot—named Melvin 1000—which was programmed to greet visitors on their way into the Way Things Work attraction was in danger of not responding to children: Melvin couldn't bend down far enough to reach the short folks. In a flash, experts from Sony's Entertainment Technology Group were on the way to readjust Melvin 1000 in time to meet and greet and bow to Mr. Idei.

—LILLIAN ROSS

GOOD NEIGHBORS DEPT.

Closing a chapter at the New York Public Library.



The real-estate developer Marshall Rose is not one of those builders who erect ugly high-rise apartment towers on Second Avenue so that they can get enough money to assure themselves of immortality by putting their name on a museum. Certainly Rose has made plenty of money, and he can talk depreciation and square footage and tax writeoffs with the best of them. But then he goes off and does something like help the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund build a new headquarters, or find a way for Central Synagogue to sell its air rights, or figure out how the New York Public Library could build a new branch in the landmark B. Altman building and restore its extravagant Beaux-Arts main building at the same time. He is a real-estate developer who seems to have invented a new profession, as a kind of real-estate adviser in the public interest.

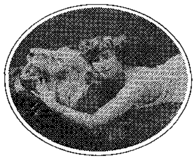
Rose is also unusual in the real-estate business because he appears not to have made any enemies in a cutthroat profession of exceedingly thin-skinned people. He appears to have a hand in everything in New York, but he never leaves fingerprints. He is now stepping down after his second stint as chairman of the New York Public Library. The other day, Rose, the sixty-two-year-old son of a furrier, said that he views his exalted presence in the land of Brooke Astor and Bill Blass with equal parts gratitude and bemusement. "Some people make dresses, I make buildings," he said, sitting in his office on Madison Avenue. "It's a business. But I always wanted an interesting life, and for me the question was how could I have that."

He went on, "For example, in the late seventies, I helped the New York City Bar Association, on Forty-fourth Street, which was wasting a whole building with library stacks. I showed them how we could put the books underneath the building, and sell the rest of the building for fourteen million dollars. It was like a Rubik's Cube, moving the spaces around." And then in 1981 Vartan Gregorian, the library's president, called to enlist Rose's help in figuring out how to deal with "the longest urinal in New York," as Gregorian called Bryant Park before it was reconstructed. Rose ended up joining the board of the library, and by 1990 he was its chairman.

Rose's wife, Jill, died of cancer in 1996; he had stepped down as chairman of the library for the first time in 1995 to spend more time with her. When Elizabeth Rohatyn, who succeeded him, moved to Paris with her husband, Felix, the United States Ambassador, Rose was called back. "The library never deaccessions anything, including old chairmen," he said. "They looked in the blue recycling bin and there I was."

Even Rose's excessive humility may no longer be enough to protect his cherished privacy. Last year, his friends Don Hewitt and Marilyn Berger introduced him to their friend Candice Bergen, who had lost her husband, Louis Malle, just before Rose's wife died. Bergen and Rose have been together ever since.

—PAUL GOLDBERGER



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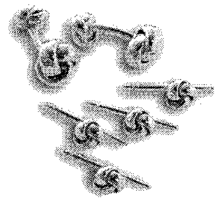

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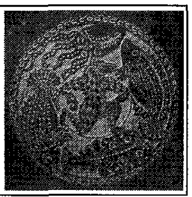

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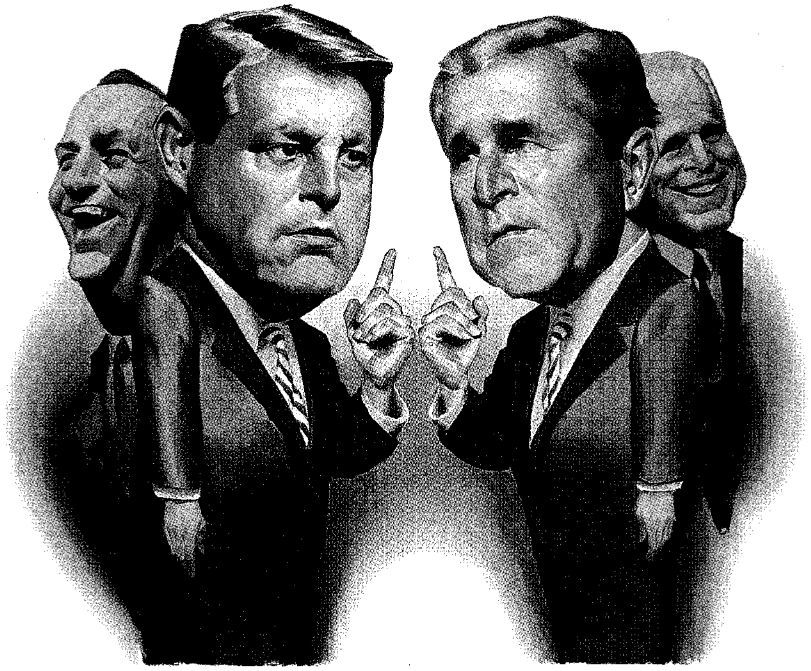
THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE MEN IN THE MIRROR

Is this what post-Clinton politics will look like?

BY JOE KLEIN



Gore and Bradley, Bush and McCain: Front-runners pursued by heroes.

DANIEL ADEL

ONE of the more depressing legacies of the Clinton era may turn out to be a rhetorical tic—the unctuous gerund. The White House routinely deploys this sunny grammatical device to announce good news or big plans: "Putting People First" and "Strengthening American Families" and "Reinventing Government," for example. The style is used too persistently to be accidental; it has to be the product of market testing. But sometimes there are unintended consequences. In late May, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the President found himself responding to serious charges of Chinese nuclear espionage beneath a banner that said "TAPPING AMERICA'S POTENTIAL."

The banner was meant to inspire the delegates at a White House Conference on community "Empowerment Zones," which has been a Clinton anti-poverty initiative of mixed success. A more subtle goal of the conference was to give a boost to the Presidential campaign of the Vice-President, Albert Gore, Jr.—a campaign that is often, prematurely, described as "stumbling"—and to give Bill Clinton a chance to make amends for his injudicious admission to the *Times* last month that he had been concerned about Gore's clumsiness on the stump. Even in his less than inspiring performances, Clinton's ease on the podium seems to infect his audiences on some preconscious level: there is a lush, comforting fluency to it. On this day, the President spoke briefly, to rousing cheers, and then went off to Florida for a family vacation, leaving the Vice-President to plod through a highly choreographed "town meeting" on community empowerment, in which most of his comments and questions to the audience were written out on blue cue cards, which he consulted frequently.

The President's exit, with his designated successor Wandering Aimlessly in a Clinton-style venue, was apt; it is where any account of the campaign to elect a President in the year 2000 should begin. Bill Clinton is leaving us. Each of his potential replacements will have to deal with the conundrum of his short-term legacy: a fabulously successful country in which the political leadership—and perhaps the notion of politics itself—has been largely discredited. Each of the candidates will be running against

Clinton, and running quickly: the primary schedule has been compressed ridiculously, and most of the big contests, including the New York and California primaries, will have taken place by early March. Running against Clinton will be particularly hard for the Vice-President, of course—he bears the burden of both the President's strengths (which he can never match) and the President's weaknesses (which he'll never overcome). The news accounts of the Texas conference were almost exclusively comparisons of Clinton and Gore on the podium, none of which were felicitous. The *USA Today* headline: "CLINTON GOES FULL-BORE IN PRAISE OF GORE."

But Gore's visit to Texas, part of a three-day Southern swing during the last week of May, had a significance beyond the quality of his oratory. (His speeches were, indeed, quite dreadful at times—particularly at a Hispanic fund-raiser one evening in McAllen, where a local congressman, unbidden, offered a glass of water to the featured speaker. "Did I look thirsty?" Gore asked.) Still, over the three days the Vice-President made two important domestic-policy speeches and he raised nearly a million dollars—activities that, perhaps inadvertently, provided a preview of both the larger themes and the subtexts of the campaign to come.

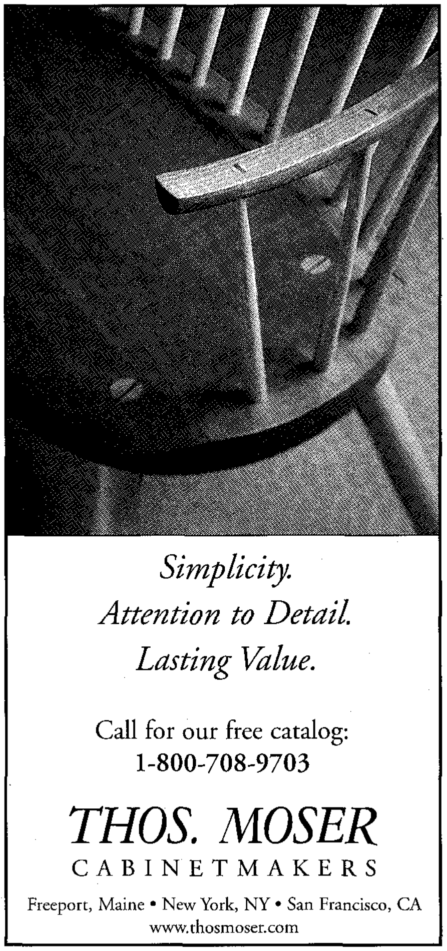
The speeches were worthy but curious. Both of them touted ideas introduced by conservative Republicans. "Empowerment Zones"—the notion of providing tax and other incentives for businesses to locate in poor districts—had been promoted by Representative Jack Kemp, in the nineteen-eighties. In Gore's other speech, delivered in Atlanta, the Vice-President promoted the idea of using religious organizations to provide social services for the poor—an idea called "charitable choice," which had originally been inserted in the 1996 welfare-reform act by Senator John Ashcroft, Republican of Missouri, and had been passed despite the opposition of most Senate Democrats. The Atlanta speech was not at all clumsy, by the way: it was tightly written and well delivered, and potentially quite controversial. Democrats tend to be militant secularists; they like to see government money spent by government operatives, even though there is growing evidence that local religiously inspired groups can be quite effective in taking care of the poor. Under a banner that said "STRENGTHENING FAITH AND FAMILY," Gore proposed expanding Ashcroft's idea to include church involvement in drug-treatment and juvenile-delinquency programs and in homeless shelters.

The "charitable choice" speech received some notice, but not much—except, perhaps, in Austin, where aides to Governor George W. Bush were quite exercised over it. Bush is the leading Republican Presidential prospect for 2000, and he was an early, enthusiastic proponent of "charitable choice." Gore's sudden embrace of the issue was seen as tactical and very sneaky. "Does he really believe in it?" a Bush aide asked me. "If so, why did the Administration try to block our efforts to bring charitable choice to Texas?" (Actually, what the Administration had blocked was Bush's efforts to reform welfare by privatizing the application process.)

The Gore speeches and the Bush camp's perturbed reaction to them suggest that there are even fewer ideological differences than usual between Republicans and Democrats this time. George W. Bush calls himself a "compassionate conservative." Albert Gore calls himself a "practical idealist." A great deal of money and energy will be expended over the next eighteen months to persuade us that these mean different things.

"In the nineties, there has been only one successful philosophy for electing and governing in advanced Western democracies—the Third Way," says Al From, the not at all abashed president of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council, which came to the Third Way first and has provided much of the post-ideological ballast for Bill Clinton's campaigns. (For the purposes of this article, the Third Way will be defined as a mystical, muscular, yet sometimes squishy path between traditional liberalism and conservatism.) "In 2000, the Republicans are going to try to steal our politics," From continued. "They have to become credible on compassion issues, just as in 1992 we had to become credible on fiscal discipline, toughness on crime, and welfare. It's no accident that George Bush campaigned for governor on a bus that had 'Opportunity' written on one side and 'Responsibility' on the other." ("Opportunity, Responsibility, and Community" had been the mantra for both Bill Clinton and England's Tony Blair.)

Perhaps the most startling aspect of the nascent Presidential campaign is the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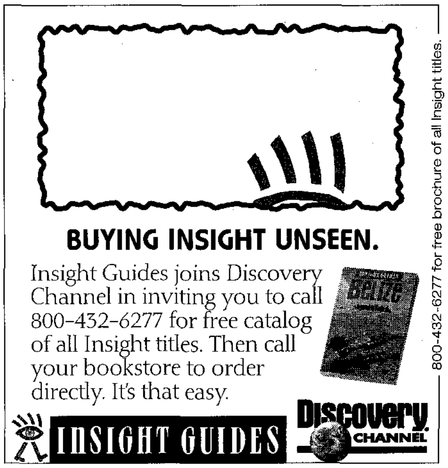
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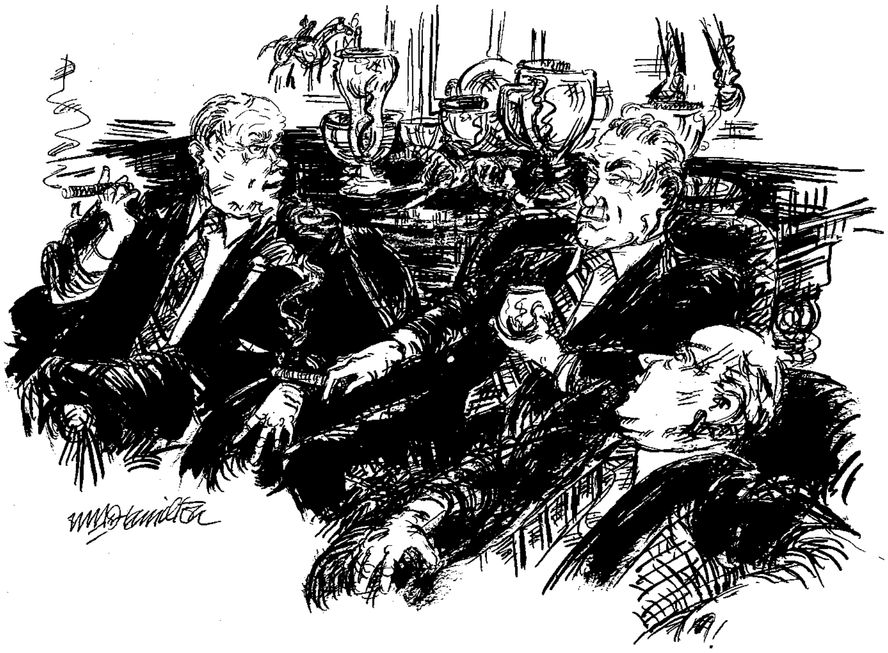


"Mother's ninety-one and still depreciating."

prevalence of Third Waydom and the dearth of ideologues, aside from the usual run of conservative Christian activists. There is no left-liberal in the race—no Jesse Jackson or Paul Wellstone—and not even a labor liberal, like Richard Gephardt or Tom Harkin, who ran in 1988 and 1992, respectively. Among the Republicans, there is no conservative, supply-side libertarian—no Jack Kemp or Phil Gramm or Steve Forbes. There is *a* Steve Forbes running, but not the same one that ran in 1996: this year's model is a religious activist, who told NBC's Tim Russert that, given the choice, he would rather pass a constitutional amendment banning abortion than impose a flat tax (his previous spiritual balm of choice). Forbes will compete with Pat Buchanan, Gary Bauer, Alan Keyes, Senator Bob Smith, of New Hampshire, and Dan Quayle for the affections of approximately twenty-five thousand religious conservatives who throw a lot of weight in the Iowa precinct caucuses, which will be the first major contest on the Presidential schedule. It is unlikely that any of the above will be plausible Presidential possibilities for very long after that.

The remainder of the candidates—those most likely to succeed—tend to be Third Wayfarers: free traders and globalists, foreign-policy activists, defense hawks (even Clinton has proposed a significant increase in defense spending), and people who believe in practical compassion or conservative idealism, or some combination of those four words, when it comes to domestic policy. They've all been saying, with varying degrees of eloquence, pretty much the same thing about the most compelling issue of the campaign so far—the massacre at Columbine High School, in Littleton, Colorado. They say there are no easy answers. They favor most of the recent, modest gun-control proposals. They wax spiritual: some of Gore's best moments in recent weeks have come when he allowed the former divinity student inside him to spend a few minutes onstage, spouting Scripture and decrying "hollow secularism" (and right-wing religious extremism as well). Littleton has also allowed mainstream candidates to appropriate the most attractive aspect of the religious conservative message: anger over the excesses of the entertainment industry. The lip service paid to less popular conservative religious positions, like opposition to abortion, has declined dramatically. The mainstream Republicans in the race say they are opposed to abortion, but they don't seem eager to do much about it except ban late-term procedures and impose parental-consent provisions.

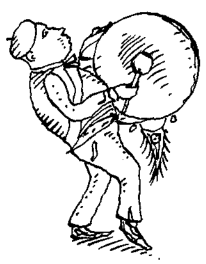
THERE are thirteen more or less major candidates for the Presidency, although most are still being coy about their availability, insisting that they are merely in an "exploratory" phase of the process. Of these, only four are doing well enough to be considered, as of now, plausible successors to Bill Clinton: Gore and Bush, of course, plus the Republican senator John McCain, of Arizona, and Bill Bradley, a Democrat who used to serve in the Senate from New Jersey. It is not impossible that one of the other Republicans will prove formidable. Steve Forbes has a lot of money. Lamar Alexander has strong organizations in Iowa and New Hampshire. Dan Quayle is said to have the support of the rabid but influential New Hampshire newspaper the Manchester *Union Leader*. Elizabeth Dole is drawing large crowds, which include many hopeful women. Pat Buchanan is probably the cleverest politician of the bunch, and John Kasich's enthusiasm is attractive to younger Republicans. But any of these second-tier candidates, except Forbes, could just as easily drop out of the race before the first votes are cast. None of them are having much luck raising money.

There is a mirror-image symmetry to the four remaining contenders. Two extremely well-funded front-runners, Bush and Gore, are pursued by two American heroes, a former prisoner of war and a former professional basketball player, who are proposing that practical compassion is not enough—that the heavily focus-tested and relentlessly marketed style of modern politics itself needs to be overhauled. But since, as any beard-trimmer or eyebrow-plucker knows, mirror images are visually reversed, there is another twist to the symmetry: the front-runners are pursuing opposite strategies from each other, as are the heroes. Indeed, George Bush and Bill Bradley are running similar campaigns: they are vague and Olympian; they peer down on their opponents from a great height; they wait and ruminate, and hope to get away with enunciating broad themes. Gore and McCain are less ethereal. Gore has given the most detailed policy speeches of the early campaign. McCain will answer any question with astonishing candor, even to the point of attacking his own party's leaders on issues like campaign-finance reform and military-base closings. (He favors both.)

It has not been a very good spring for Gore, the pundits say, yet he is in significantly better shape at this point than the last incumbent Vice-President who ran to replace the boss: George H. W. Bush, in 1988. He has amassed huge piles of money and endorsements—standard front-runner benefits—and has a solid lead over Bradley in the polls.

Gore *has* had several embarrassing moments. In early March, he claimed to have taken "the initiative" in "creating" the Internet—a claim that has since provided great fodder for Republicans and late-night comedians, although experts say that it is only a ballpark exaggeration: for nearly twenty years in Congress, Gore was the most insistent promoter of computer-communications technology. The Vice-Presidency is a notoriously difficult perch from which to mount a campaign (before Bush, Martin Van Buren was the last Veep to electorally succeed his President), but Gore does have the benefit of a fabulously healthy economy and an essentially happy country. His public speaking has even improved—a bit, occasionally. He doesn't indulge in wanton banshee screaming to convey enthusiasm, as he once did. He still suffers from severe "thank you" disease—the need to acknowledge every public official present at every event. And there is a sense that politics is a foreign language for him: he doesn't speak it naturally. He takes running for President too seriously, too literally; he stews for weeks about every stray "Internet" goof.

But Gore's goofiness will soon have company: Bush the Younger is about to begin his national campaign. Not that George W. will be a particularly clumsy Presidential candidate—no one can know that yet—but any stray errors he does make are destined to be inflated by a press corps swollen with anticipation for his campaign to begin. Like Gore, Bush has amassed great amounts of money (nearly twelve million dollars), and endorsements from sixteen governors, ten senators, and a hundred and seventeen members of the House of Representatives. The endorsements are astonishing. Bush has yet to make a single Presidential foray; he spent the winter and spring shepherding his state legislature through its biennial session. But the Republican Party seems to have a pathological need for an anointed front-runner, and an aversion to internecine conflict.



June will be George W. Bush's month to shine, or to be tarnished. He is destined to receive almost as much ink in the coming weeks as Hillary Clinton. When he ventures forth, finally, from Austin, to campaign in Iowa and New Hampshire, he will be accompanied by hundreds of reporters. That will be a terrible burden. More than anything—more than money, perhaps—candidates for President need time, and space, to hone their message and get comfortable running for the most important political office in the world; they need to experiment, to find out what works in states where they are largely unknown; they need to do this in front of small groups of voters, with only a few stray reporters on their tail. The last non-incumbent candidate for President who entered the race with no national-campaign experience, a big lead in the polls, and a monster press corps was Ted Kennedy, in 1980. The lead disappeared very quickly. "Of course we're aware of the problem," a Bush adviser says. "But we haven't had an alternative. For the last year, we've been the front-runner. There would have been busloads of press any time we started campaigning. And now people in Iowa and New Hampshire are going to be wondering whether he has the answer to three important questions: Why are you running? What are your core convictions? Do you know what this job is all about? The press may want specificity—and so do the voters, but not yet. They're not going to expect him to lay out his fourteen-point plan for the modernization of Social Security on his first swing through Iowa."

It is safe to assume that George W. Bush will be accompanied on that first swing by platoons of bright young aides chattering into cell phones and walkie-talkies, and supported by a larger army, back in Austin, of experts and consultants. Each stop on his tour will be carefully prepared: there will be lights and microphones, and thoughtfully positioned risers for the press. These are the standard accoutrements of big-league politics, and they are noteworthy here for one reason only: the two "character" candidates in the race, Bill Bradley and John McCain, seem to be running against all that—against the style, rather than the

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substance, of modern American politics. Their campaigns are clever, if oblique, protests against the way politicians have come to be marketed, the way politicians present themselves in public. Neither man is exactly a stylistic radical; both are raising money—rather successfully—the old-fashioned way (although each hopes to make an issue of the campaign-finance system). But each wears his disdain for marketing as a personal badge of political integrity, and this challenge to polling and posturing may turn out to be the only fun to be had in the campaign to come.

Both Bradley and McCain are loners. They travel light. They are quite unlikely to appear beneath a focus-tested gerundial banner—although I found myself supplying the missing elements for both campaigns. Bradley's call to arms could easily be "Asking Lots of Questions," and McCain's could be "Ticking People Off."

Several weeks ago, in Des Moines, I watched Bradley wander into a hotel meeting room filled with local Democratic activists and casually plant himself in front of the podium, in near-total darkness, and begin speaking without very much ado. (Indeed, the audience was better lit than the candidate.) He was dressed somewhat more casually than most politicians—a blue blazer and tan slacks—and there was a laconic ease to his presentation, which wandered from a thumbnail sketch of his personal history to a fairly standard recitation of the challenges ahead. Bradley is every bit as soporific on the stump as Gore, a fact he seems to be flaunting, almost as a sign of integrity: his rhetoric is free of rhetorical devices. There are no soaring perorations, no efforts to inspire through words—and not much of an effort to inform or instruct, either, for that matter. "I hope you'll think about becoming a part of this," he says in closing. "I'll be happy to hear what you have to say. I like to listen. Make some suggestions. I take suggestions very well."

The next morning, Bradley engages in more aggressive listening—listening has become the signature of his early campaign—with a group of doctors and patients at a local hospital. He spends the better part of an hour hearing their complaints. He tells them he's working on a health-care policy, which he'll unveil in the fall: "When I come out with it, not everyone is going to be happy. It's going to be like throwing raw meat to hungry wolves, with the hope that we'll be able to stimulate some thinking while they're chewing on it. I'll listen to what they have to say, and make the appropriate changes."

This is delusional, of course—the idea of a serious, evolving policy discussion in the midst of a political campaign. (The wolves, though, are quite real, already hungry and howling.) Indeed, Bradley's most radical ideas concern his relationship with the press—particularly his desire to control the trajectory of his campaign. He has been studiously diffident so far, refusing to appear on any of the Sunday-morning political talk shows until he has something important to say. He has been known to become testy over stories that his campaign is doing well, even though such accounts are usually good for fund-raising and most of the other candidates distribute packets of optimistic press clippings to all comers. Mike Glover, the veteran Associated Press political reporter in Iowa, says that Bradley once got angry over a story he wrote about the progress of the campaign: "He didn't want to build expectations yet. He said nothing was going to happen for another four or five months."

JOHN MCCAIN'S strategy is quite different from Bill Bradley's, but has the same end in view: both are hoping to offer the voters the opposite of spin. McCain does this by speaking his mind, relentlessly. He is wildly impolitic, candid to a fault. He can be seen somewhere on television almost every hour. Most recently, he has been ubiquitously criticizing Bill Clinton's policy in Kosovo; he uses words like "stupid" and "feckless" and "morally disturbing." When asked by a New Hampshire Rotarian recently what he thought was going to happen in Kosovo, he said, "Oh, they'll come up with some sort of dirty compromise that they'll spin as a victory and hope the Dow Jones keeps going up."

Later, on the way to his next event, he elaborated: "I swear I will never take a poll on a national-security issue. You can't expect the public to understand the nuances of a situation like Kosovo, or Chinese espionage, or Nunn-Lugar funding"—that is, money to help Russia dismantle its nuclear weapons. And then, as if he were afraid that he hadn't told the whole truth, he added, "I'm not saying I won't poll, ever. But not on foreign policy. You use polling to find out what people think is important, what they need in their daily lives; then you come up with the solutions you think work best."

McCain's effect on audiences, and reporters, can be breathtaking. In the course of a New Hampshire morning, I saw him attack his party's leadership in the Senate (Trent Lott by name, in fact) on the issue of military-base closings, then promise to oppose ethanol subsidies—a corn-state holy grail—when he campaigns next in Iowa, and also say that Boris Yeltsin should probably be "out at the Betty Ford clinic instead of in Moscow."

There is an intensity to all this—a clenched-jaw anger, and, at times, a crudeness—that threatens to spin out of control. At an evening meeting with Republican activists in Amherst, New Hampshire, McCain joked that "nine months to the day" after the alien landing in Roswell, New Mexico, "Al Gore was born." (Last year, McCain made an even worse joke about Chelsea Clinton's parentage.) This crudeness seems perpetually at war with a grace and a tolerance and a degree of self-knowledge—a willingness to admit mistakes—that make John McCain a compelling public figure, and his story an American drama that will make this race more tolerable.

Of course, neither McCain nor Bradley—to say nothing of the other long-shot candidates—has much of a chance to win. In Presidential politics, front-runners usually prevail (even pitiful front-runners, like Bob Dole and Walter Mondale). This may be particularly true in the year 2000, if the economy remains strong. It will be difficult for any politician to pierce the narcotic smog of national affluence, especially if the election is merely about the maintenance of good times. But if it becomes, more directly, a question of how best to replace Bill Clinton—if there is, finally, a reaction against the oleaginous, market-tested Presidency, with its carefully polished choreography and all those giddy gerunds—then, perhaps, there will be a campaign of more than horse-race significance, a campaign that raises essential questions about the nature of leadership and the nature of citizenship in a country so successful that politics has almost begun to seem irrelevant. ♦

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ME V. BIG MIKE

BY LARRY DOYLE

"He was the end of my pompom. I'm the cheerleader."—*Remark made by Disney chairman Michael Eisner about his former protégé Jeffrey Katzenberg, revealed in court proceedings.*

"$60 zillion."—*Amount of settlement suggested by Mr. Katzenberg's attorney, quoted in the Hollywood Reporter on May 12th.*

"Now that we all know what he got, more are likely to jump on the bandwagon."—*A Hollywood insider, shortly after the judge ruled in Katzenberg's favor, on May 19th.*

NOW comes the Plaintiff, LARRY DOYLE, and for his First Complaint against the Defendant states unto the Honorable Court as follows:

1. That the Defendant, BIG MIKE, was at all times relevant to the above-entitled cause of action, a student in the fourth grade at St. Mary's Elementary School in Buffalo Grove, in the County of Cook, State of Illinois.

2. That the Defendant, BIG MIKE, was also known as BAD MIKE, BIG BAD MIKE, MIKE THE GIANT, GIANT MIKE, THE JOLLY GREEN MIKE, MIKE THE MIDGET KILLER, and THE POUNDER.

3. That the Defendant was then, and has remained, large for his age.

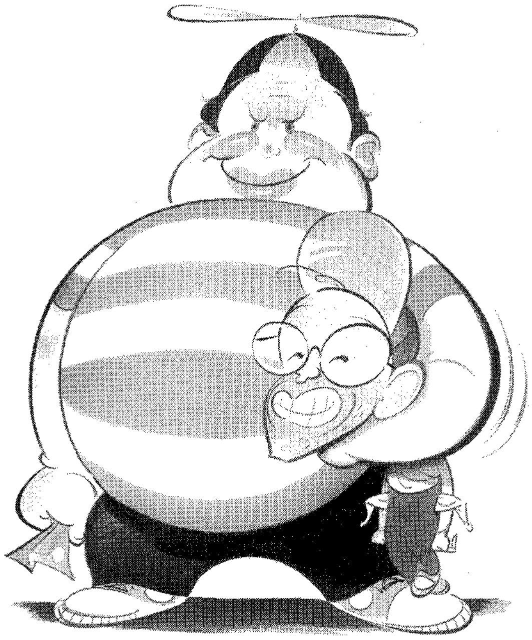
4. That the Defendant is now the owner and operator of BIG MIKE'S ACURA, in Palatine, in the County of Cook, State of Illinois.

5. That the Defendant, at all times relevant to the above-entitled cause of action, controlled the fourth grade through a reign of terror in his capacity as Bully.

6. That the Plaintiff served the Defendant in the capacity of Sidekick from approximately September 11, 1967, until November 13, 1967.

7. That on or about May 19, 1999, the Plaintiff recovered memories of unimaginable conscious pain and suffering inflicted by the Defendant, as well as a breach of contract.

8. That the amount in controversy exceeds the jurisdictional amount of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000.00), and that the amount of Plaintiff's damages in this case exceeds Sixty Zillion Dollars ($60,000,000,000,000…et al.).



COUNT I

Intentional infliction of emotional distress, physical intimidation, extortion, and bodily injury on the part of Defendant.

9. That the said Plaintiff understood or was made to understand that his Duties as sole and exclusive Sidekick to the Defendant would include but not be limited to: establishing and maintaining the Defendant's reputation for violence; taunting the smaller, weaker, or more infirm of the students under the Defendant's purview; scheduling Poundings on behalf of the Defendant; collecting milk and other monies on behalf of the Defendant; seconding the Defendant's remarks, laughing at his jokes and insults, and otherwise bolstering the Defendant's self-confidence.

10. That the Plaintiff was led to be-

ERIC PALMA

lieve that by performing these Duties he would be exempt from the reign of terror visited upon the fourth grade by the Defendant. In fact, despite the Plaintiff's best efforts to fulfill his Duties in a competent and timely manner, the Defendant focussed a majority of his Bullying activities on the person of the Plaintiff.

11. That the Defendant did intentionally and maliciously inflict emotional distress on the Plaintiff, in the following particulars, by way of illustration, and not limitation:

a. Intentionally and maliciously subjecting the Plaintiff to ridicule by alluding to the Plaintiff's then small stature, applying to the Plaintiff such appellations as Shrimpo, My Retriever, Tiny Tim, Jr., Butt-Munchkin, and Knee-High to a Grasshopper Turd;

b. Intentionally and maliciously humiliating the Plaintiff by requiring him to answer to the name Midge, a shortened form of Midget, in a high girlish register, under threat of a Pounding;

c. Intentionally and maliciously defaming the Plaintiff with the creation and performance of a mock television program, sometimes entitled "I Hate Larry" and at other times known as "That Little Midget," which involved the Defendant's walking on his knees while producing flatulence sounds with his mouth, said portrayal being an inaccurate and slanderous depiction of the Plaintiff;

d. On several occasions, in front of peers, drawing attention to the Plaintiff's "boner" when none was present.

12. That on or about September 30, 1967, Defendant conscripted the Plaintiff, on a Saturday, outside and beyond the terms of his employment as a playground Sidekick, into indentured servitude in the building of a Fort in the back yard of the Defendant. On this occasion, and with no provocation, the Defendant flung with extreme force the Plaintiff's father's good hammer into Poo Pond, so named for its adjacency to a sewage-treatment plant. The Defendant then ridiculed the Plaintiff for his subsequent uncontrolled weeping, fostering in the Plaintiff an inability to cry as an adult, limiting his emotional range, and diminishing his enjoyment of romantic motion pictures and other popular entertainment.

13. That by way of extreme and outrageous conduct the Defendant visited ritual tortures upon the Plaintiff, including Indian Burns, Dutch Rubs, Pink Bellies, Wet Willies, Noogies, and, completely without regard to sanitation and safety, Swirlees, in which the Plaintiff's head was forced deep into the bowl of a toilet, which was then flushed, causing water to swirl about the Plaintiff's head and face in an alarming manner.

14. That on or about November 13, 1967, the Plaintiff's ninth birthday, Defendant said he had "a special present" for the Plaintiff but in fact used the occasion to commit a deliberate and heinous act on the Plaintiff. Reaching into the Plaintiff's trousers from behind, the Defendant gripped the elastic waistband of the Plaintiff's briefs and yanked upward with a violent motion. Yelling "I am a cheerleader! You are my pompom," the Defendant did wantonly and recklessly raise the Plaintiff into the air, supported solely by his briefs, and proceeded to thrust his arm out violently several times under the pretext of giving the Plaintiff "birthday cheers." As a direct result of this assault, Plaintiff was transferred from St. Mary's to a public school, where he received an inferior education.

Count II

Breach of contract on the part of Defendant.

15. That the Defendant stated on several occasions that the Plaintiff, for his services as Sidekick, would receive "his share" of milk and other monies collected.

16. That on the sole occasion the Plaintiff inquired about his aforementioned share he received payment in the form of a Pounding.

17. That the Plaintiff estimates that he collected no less than Seven Dollars and Twenty Cents ($7.20) on behalf of the Defendant.

18. That, Ten Per Cent (10%) being a reasonable "share" based on established show-business practice, the Plaintiff was then entitled to Seventy-two Cents (72¢). With interest of Six Per Cent (6%) per annum, and irrespective of any compensation due the Plaintiff as a result of the conscious pain, fright, shock, and anxiety then caused and mental pain, anguish, and sorrow that continue to be caused by the Defendant's actions, Plaintiff is now owed Four Dollars and Sixty-five Cents ($4.65). ♦

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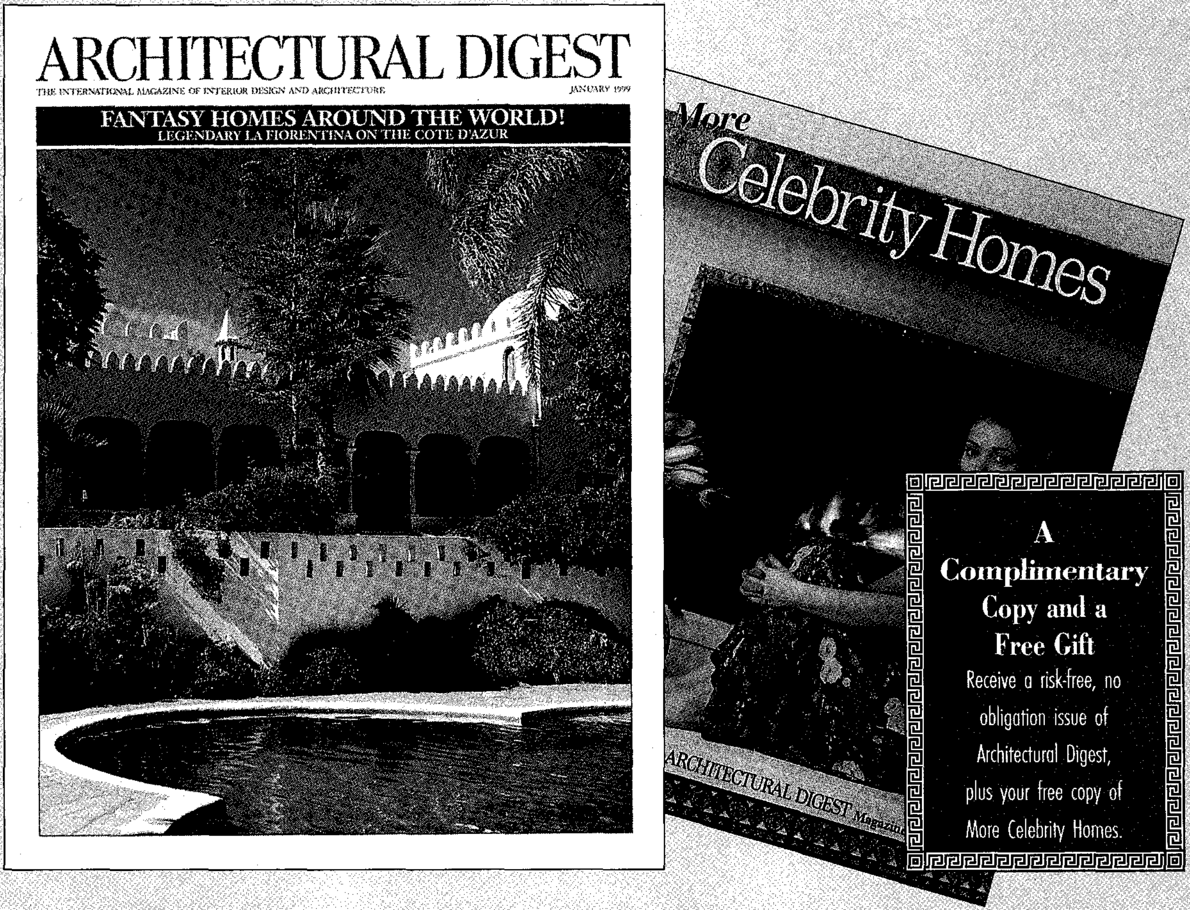
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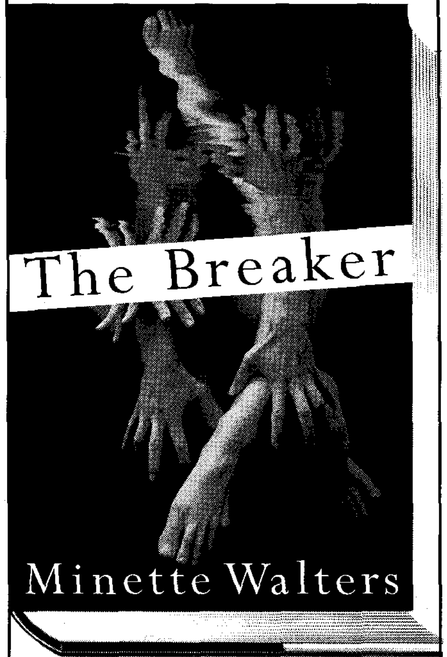

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ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

A KUBRICK ODYSSEY

The director's last screenwriter recounts his labyrinthine adventure on "Eyes Wide Shut."

BY FREDERIC RAPHAEL

LIKE limousine drivers, screenwriters tend to wait for the call from prestige clients. When, in the autumn of 1994, my London agent called me with the news that Stanley Kubrick wanted to know if I was free to work with him, I cancelled my other plans. Kubrick was about the only English-speaking director for whose films (apart from "Lolita") I had unqualified admiration. As a young man, I had been stunned by "Paths of Glory." "Dr. Strangelove" and "Barry Lyndon" were the later masterpieces of a man who preferred never to repeat himself.

After a long preliminary talk on the telephone, Kubrick sent me a gray photocopy of a novella set in Hapsburg Vienna. The title and the author's name had been conspicuously excised, but after reading the story I guessed that it must be the work of either Arthur Schnitzler or Stefan Zweig. If the story's datedness was part of its charm, I assumed that the menace of its eroticism was what appealed to Kubrick. It centered on a doctor, Fridolin, and his devoted wife, Albertina, who are fond parents of a little daughter. Their conjugal tranquillity is shattered when they attend a masquerade ball at which they are separately propositioned. Prompted by his wife's confessions of her sexual fantasies about another man, Fridolin embarks on a dreamlike journey of sexual misadventures, culminating in an orgy where he is nearly murdered. Among the minor characters are a pimplike costumier and his retarded nymphet daughter; a pianist, Nachtigall, who plays blindfolded at the orgy; a charming prostitute who may be syphilitic; and a self-sacrificing baroness. The influence of Freud was manifest; Klimt or Schiele might have done the illustrations, had there been any.

In our next phone conversation, I learned that Kubrick wanted to transfer the action from fin-de-siècle Vienna to contemporary New York. Did I think it was possible? It was possible, I told him, but hadn't many things changed since 1900, not least the relations between men and women?

"Think so?" Kubrick said. "I don't think so."

I thought about it; and then I said, "Neither do I."

Kubrick called Ron Mardigian, my agent at the William Morris office in Beverly Hills, and a deal was quickly made. Screenwriters, like most Hollywood talent, are quoted on an almost official stock market. Kubrick did not haggle; Mardigian did not push him too hard. So far, so swift; then the lawyers came in. While they kept each other busy with mutually lucrative quibbles, Kubrick suggested that we meet at his house in St. Albans, twenty miles north of London, and talk. "Sooner the better," I said.

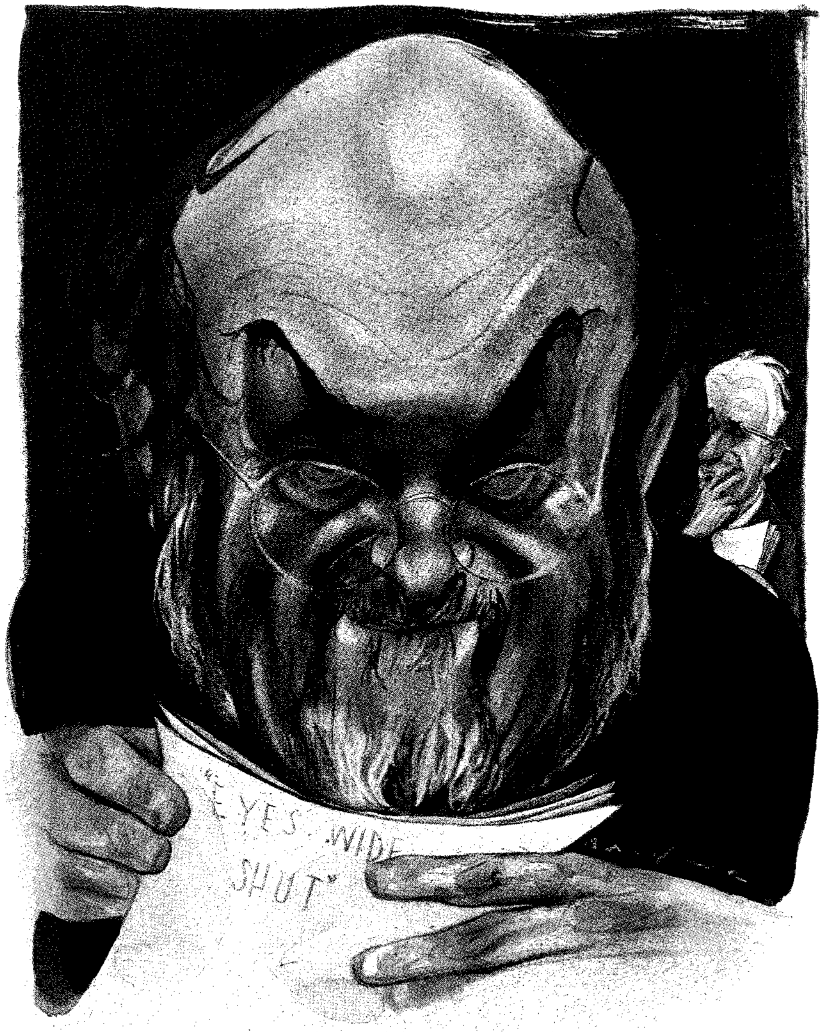
On the day fixed for me to go out to his house, in November, I took a couple of my books from the shelf to give to him. My latest novel was called "A Double Life." The title, and the fat text, could be taken as warnings that I was not merely a mechanic for hire.

KUBRICK sent a cab to pick me up at my South Kensington apartment at noon. Once in St. Albans, we passed the town's honey-colored cathedral. It was mounted in surroundings of suburban banality, like a beautiful thought in a crass paragraph. We drove along a country road, and, after many twists, turned left through ornate green metal gates. The grandiose surroundings recalled the country house where Fridolin goes to take part in the orgy.

We went past a Victorian Gothic lodge, down a private road through rustily white-fenced, empty meadows. Striped with damp sunlight, it was a scene of dignified autumnal melancholy. We forked left, past signs announcing "Private Property," and proceeded over some speed bumps to another gate, which was closed. The driver got out to press the necessary buttons. He had to do it again at still another gate, sixty yards farther on.

The house was a rather low, very wide Victorian pile, with a pillared façade. There was an ample gravel courtyard and an air of pungent desolation. The place was heavily protected, but what riches were there to protect? It seemed more like a gargantuan cottage than a mansion. Across from the main building was a large brick stable block, which evidently contained offices. Several unpolished cars were parked on the gravel.

Kubrick himself opened the door. He was wearing blue overalls with black buttons. He might have been a minor employee of the French railways. He was a smallish, rounded man with a beard that blurred rather than defined his features. His black eyes were enlarged by big spectacles. His hands were curiously delicate and white.



Kubrick and Raphael: "He did not want the scenes to carry any authorial mark but his. Anything that was mine he was never going to do."

STEVE BRODNER

"You got here." He spoke as if unused to speech and not comfortable with company, even when he had invited it. I felt that he might have suffered some trauma that had made him lose confidence in his person, though not in what he could do. His name was bigger than he was.

He led me into a long room at the back of the house where large windows looked onto a walled lawn: wide and deep but not formal. Was that a peacock out there? A black dog was asleep in a basket by the open French window. No other houses were visible along the low horizon. A yew hedge to the right closed off the view. He invited me to sit down.

I knew that Kubrick had been a ranked chess player. It was as if I had been summoned by a cinematic Kasparov, and it was time to get out the board. I had to start measuring up, if I was to be worthy of my opponent: chess is a game of bloodless sadism and polite execution. As the writer, I was saddled with the black pieces; my best hope was to respond effectively when under attack, as I expected to be.

I had little knowledge of Kubrick's reputation as a colleague. But he *was* a great filmmaker, and I wanted to see this thing through, whatever it was. To do so, I should have to combine tact with forthrightness, deference with independence. All movie contracts these days tend to have "cutoff" clauses—points at which a writer can be paid off and flushed into oblivion. My business (and my sport) was to make myself indispensable.

We sat in upright chairs and talked. This, I recall, is how it went:

F.R.: For me the major . . . not problem . . . weakness is that it's a good story but it's not a great one. Its final irony is a little too neat. You start with the parents with their little girl, and you end with them and her. It's cute, but it turns all that happens into a dark tale that gets tied up with a flourish like a pat little bow. There's not much progression, is there?

S.K.: What else?

F.R.: Those dreams—that kind of stuff was fresh when Freud was. They don't read very convincingly to me. I wonder what Sigmund would have thought of them. Not a lot, I would guess. All that dialogue and such accuracy of recall, it's all so . . . literary. . . . The author has to have read Freud, doesn't he?

S.K.: As a matter of fact, Freud and Arthur knew each other. . . . Damn!

Kubrick banged the flat of his hand on the table. He seemed seriously vexed at having revealed Schnitzler's name. How long had he hoped to conceal it, and why? I suspected that concealment was little more than a game he was playing with me—the warmup. As I was to discover, I underestimated his obsession with secrecy. On this occasion, he did not remain piqued for very long. He looked at me through those large glasses as if I had achieved some petty victory. Strangely enough, after I had taken that first pawn, en passant, as it were, he became more relaxed.

I expected to hear specific notions of how he wanted the story transferred to New York, but evidently this was the problem *I* had been hired to handle. The only idea that came out of our first conversation was that there should be an incident at the masquerade ball which would require Fridolin—or whatever he came to be called—to display his medical skills on a female guest with whom his host had been having a clandestine erotic encounter upstairs. I imagined the host presiding over a showy Christmas binge in a mansion rather like the Frick. When I made the mistake of saying that the Frick was on "Central Park East," Kubrick grinned and said, "Central Park East is Fifth Avenue." He collected my pawn with relish.

We talked and talked, and would have talked some more had I not looked at my watch and seen that it was nearly half past two.

He said, "Do you want something to eat?"

"Beats having a migraine."

"You suffer from migraine?"

"If I don't eat, and I have to . . . perform."

"Let's go in here, see if there's anything we can eat. Is that what you're doing? Performing?"

We walked from one long room into another. On a refectory table, next to stacks of books and boxes, was a tureen of soup, cold breasts of chicken, salad with cubes of Gruyère cheese cut into it, lettuce and watercress with raspberry vinaigrette. There was fruit salad in a big bowl.

Kubrick said, "Feel like eating any of this?"

"Looks fine," I said.

"Then let's eat it."

It was as if there might be some other rooms, with fancier meals in them, and I had settled for the first deal I was offered.

Kubrick said, "Do you like New Zealand wine?"

He was already opening a bottle. Again, I was aware of his delicate white hands. As he strained at the cork, I remembered Billy Wilder's doing the same thing and saying, "Forty-five years of masturbation, and I still don't have a muscle in my hand." Kubrick poured me a glass of white wine. "Two twenty-five a bottle. What do you think?"

I sniffed and sipped. "I think it tastes like two seventy-five."

"O.K.," he said. "Help yourself to whatever you want. What's happening when he goes upstairs?"

"She's been having sex, and she's O.D.'d on something, and Fridolin—whatever we're going to call him—"

"He was Frederic in one version I had."

"Truffaut always said that actors never really lose themselves in characters who have the same first names as they do. I'm the same. I only use Frederic ironically, or Fred for comic relief."

"What's your wife's name, by the way?"

"Sylvia."

"Sylvia? You don't mean that."

"Don't I? Yes, I do. I call her Beetle. But that's another story."

"In that same version, the wife was called Sylvia," Kubrick said.

"Whose version was this? When?"

"Call him anything you want to call him. Her, too. Albertina's a little . . ."

"Proustian?"

"Fancy. So what happens when he goes upstairs? Why can't we see them having sex up there?"

"Don't we need to keep the real erotic fireworks for the other party?"

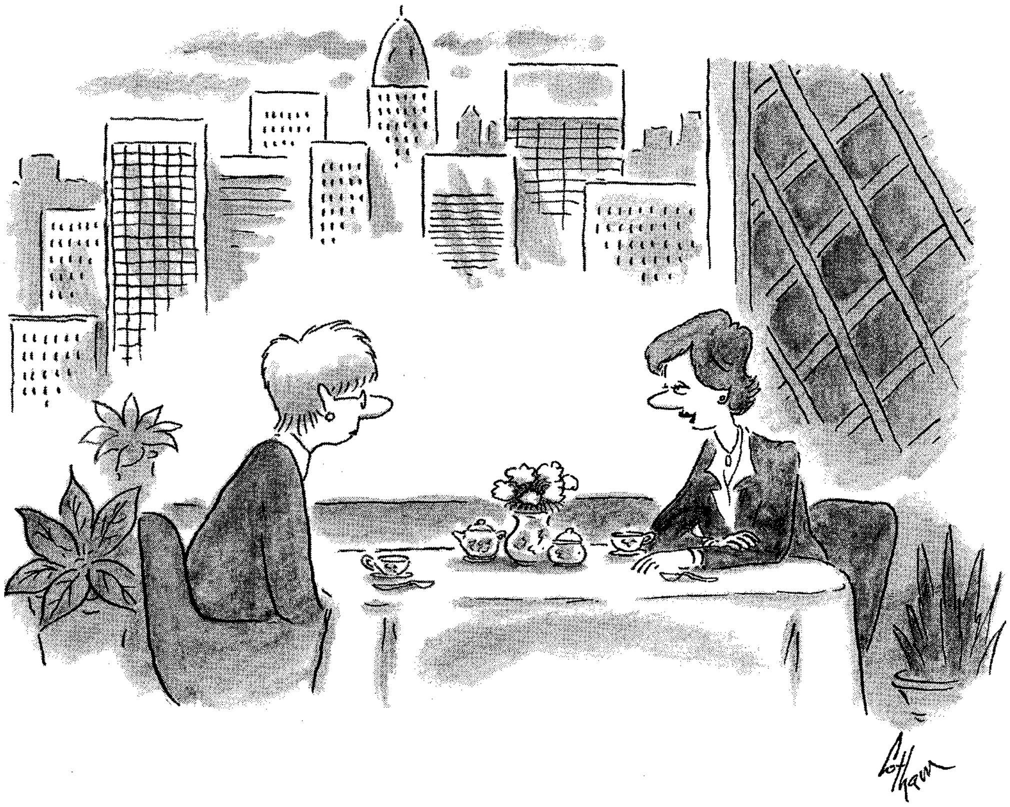
"O.K. Maybe we shouldn't have anything too much happen upstairs. Maybe it's enough that both of them have the experiences Arthur describes, and that's it."

"They can have those as well," I said.

"You like the idea of the girl upstairs?"

"I like it for what it can bring to the plot. It ought to lead to something."

"Maybe."



"He's very well off. He's got all the quantities I admire."

KUBRICK was not being indecisive; he was postponing decision. Perhaps I was not alone in being nervous. As soon as I made a comment, he backed away, as if he had taken his finger off the piece he was about to move. He thinks, and then he thinks again. We ate and talked, and then we just talked.

After a while, we went into what had evidently once been a billiard room. There were still markers and cue racks on the walls, but no table. Most of the floor was covered with newspapers with unfamiliar print. When Kubrick went to pee, I looked closely and saw that they came from Jakarta.

On his return, I asked him what particularly interested him about Indonesia. He looked puzzled. I indicated the newspapers. "Oh," he said, "not a lot. I was only checking the size of the ads for 'Full Metal Jacket.' Making sure they're as big as they should be according to the contract."

I said, "I wouldn't mind a pee myself."

He led me along corridors and down steps and around corners and into the kind of facility you would expect to find in a clubhouse. There were two cubicles side by side and a row of urinals. As he went to leave, I said, "How do I get back?"

"Stick to the left-hand wall," he said. "And keep coming."

The house had been built for a South African millionaire before the Great War, and he had, you felt, commissioned it by the cubic yard. It seemed nothing like a home whatever. It was a vast shell for the shrewd snail who found protection in it. Something about Kubrick's house had the allure of Bluebeard's castle. One did not know, or care to guess, how many screenwriters had died and been buried in its recesses.

S.K. (*seeing F.R. out*): So how are we going to work?

F.R.: How do you want to? I'd really like to make a start, see what I can make of it. Unless you're careful, you can talk so much, you leave it in the dressing room.

S.K.: Are you happy to start right in working on your own?

F.R.: Yes. I don't have to be happy, but it's the only way I ever am.

S.K. So when can you start?

F.R.: As soon as I've seen a contract.

S.K.: Why can't you start right away? Suppose I tell you you can start, there'll be no problem with the contract . . .

F.R.: I'll believe you. I do believe you.

S.K.: And you won't write anything.

F.R.: I'll think. And we can always talk some more.

S.K.: On the telephone?

F.R.: If you want. Talk isn't work. Work is when you have pages in the evening you didn't have in the morning.

S.K.: Pages. Reminds me. I understand you want to . . . go work by yourself. But . . . you know what I'm going to ask you, don't you?

F.R.: Only too well.

S.K.: So when you've done a chunk—thirty, forty pages—will you send them to me?

F.R.: You're the only director in the world I'd say yes to on that, and I say it with great reluctance.

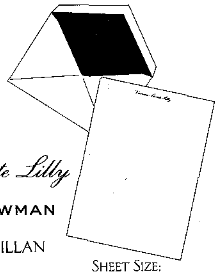
S.K.: I just don't want you to go a long, long way down some road I don't want to follow. It's a waste of your time and . . .

F.R.: Pages. Jesus.

NOVEMBER, 1994 (journal entry): We talked, but what did we achieve? Well, we lubricated the lines of communication. What does Stanley want this movie to be? Is it that he can't say, or that he won't? Why this movie? He won't even say that. Perhaps it is a puzzle that he has to solve, like a chess master who recognizes that the answer has to be a queen sacrifice but cannot yet see how or why.

He seems a little more human—commercial—than I might have hoped of a very great director. He likes stars because they know what they're doing, and because they fill theatres. My problem with him is that he is resolutely apprehensive of disclosing himself, even if it would serve his own ends.

IN one of our many subsequent talks, I pointed out to Kubrick how deeply Schnitzler's novella—entitled "Dream Story" in English—is infused with Jewishness. Schnitzler was pitilessly perceptive about the nuances both of anti-Semitism and of Jewish responses to it. For example, the episode at the orgy, in which Fridolin is literally unmasked and called on to say who he is, seems to emphasize his alienation from the "gent(i)lemen" who manhandle him. When I suggested that transferring the story to New York offered an amusing opportunity for retaining—although modernizing—the Jewishness of the story, Kubrick was firmly opposed; he wanted Fridolin to be a Harrison Fordish goy, and he forbade any reference to Jews. Did he imagine that this would keep the theme buried and



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hence more subtle? His main motive was, I am pretty sure, the wish not to alienate his audience.

NOVEMBER, 1994: Stanley says that he does not want jokes (as if he has heard something disreputable about my cooking and is saying, "No garlic, O.K.?"). He told me that he admired David Mamet's "House of Games." Was he hinting that I should adopt Mamet's anorexic allusiveness?

What is most elusive about excellent directors is what, specifically, they are excellent *at*. In the case of the second- or third-rate ones it is easy to say: they are good at getting films to direct. In S.K. there is no sign of conceit except in the intensity of his anxieties and the wariness with which he greets *every* idea I offer. S.K.'s aversion to wit spares me the most professional of all obligations—being funny is no joke—but, beyond eroticism, what does he want of me? Our subject is desire. He refuses to be concerned with the mechanics of copulation—what Nabokov called "the porno-grapple." Instead, he wants to photograph feelings, to catch the impalpable and palp *that*. I think back to the sunbeams in the château of "Paths of Glory"; Stanley dreams of capturing the air in Schnitzler's world and breathing it, furtively, into our New Yorkers.

I DECIDED to christen Fridolin "Bill." He had to be called something ordinary, and along came Bill. Albertina could be Alice. Once alone with that first blank page, I tried to imagine a film that Kubrick would want to make. I had played the willing scribe—as the *Hollywood Reporter* terms every screenwriter—but I was also a secret Pharisee: I hoped to show Kubrick that I was better than others whom he might have recruited. I also wanted to induce him to make a movie I should like him to make.

We had not discussed what kind of man our New York doctor would be, except that he should not be (manifestly) Jewish. I gave him the family name Scheuer in order to convince myself of his reality. (I had had a buddy named Jimmy Scheuer when I was at Ethical Culture, my first school, on Central Park West. I appropriated Jimmy's parents' apartment for Bill and Alice's residence.)

I began, as usual, with the credits sequence—an area in which the writer can warm up without undue anxiety, since whatever he proposes can be, and often is, jettisoned. I suggested that, with the screen black, we hear the voice of Bill Scheuer as a young medical student, whispering to himself the Latin names for parts of the female anatomy while he studies for an examination. As the screen lightens, we find ourselves in an apartment on Central Park West. Bill is in his father's den, looking at detailed textbook illustrations of the female body. I imagined, intercut with this evidence of the young man's serious interest in medicine, glimpses of the kind of erotic displays in the porno peepshows around Forty-second Street. One of these images—a dark woman wearing a garter belt and suspenders and caressing herself—is particularly arousing. This reverie is interrupted by Bill's father, a respected surgeon, who looks in on his son. Bill quickly turns a page in the textbook, as if to conceal the image of the masturbating woman, and we sense the double bind of his dutiful clinical studies and his frustrated longings for erotic experience. What I wrote was meant to make me believe in Bill's reality, and also to stimulate me into living his life. I told myself that Stanley would be seduced into believing that I knew what I was doing. I went ahead speedily; dialogue, in particular, never goes well if it goes slowly.

After four weeks, I was at the bottom of my—many times revised—forty-second page. I had reached the stage where Bill goes to see a patient whose daughter is in love with him. It would make a sweet downhill point from which to resume after Christmas. I took a deep breath and sent the pages to Kubrick.

S.K.: Freddie?

F.R.: How are you, Stanley?

S.K.: O.K., so listen. I've read the pages and I'm absolutely thrilled.

F.R.: What did you say?

S.K.: I've read the pages. I'm absolutely thrilled.

F.R.: Well, that's . . . that's a relief.

S.K.: Are you still working?

F.R.: They have this thing called Christmas in this country.

S.K.: You're stopping work for Christmas?

Doubtless, I gave Kubrick's words an oracular significance that would have amazed him. After all, it's a producer/director's job to encourage the troops. A general may be sincere, if it serves his purpose, but his purpose is never sincerity. As it turned out, my credit sequence *was* jettisoned, and Stanley vetoed "Scheuer" as Bill's last name. "Give him some name that doesn't . . . identify him, O.K.?" he instructed me. Kubrick wanted to escape into myth and inhabit an alien character who, nevertheless, would be close to him. In the end, Fridolin was given the surname "Harford," which—with Freudian neatness—does not sound very different from Hertfordshire, the county in which Kubrick lived (or, indeed, from Harrison Ford).

S.K.: Happy New Year.

F.R.: You, too.

S.K.: Did you see the new Woody Allen yet?

F.R.: "Husbands and Wives"? Yes, I did. I liked it. Except for the bilious beginning. Did you?

S.K.: Pretty good movie. Did you notice something?

F.R.: What?

S.K.: The size of the apartment they live in? Guy's supposed to be some kind of a book editor or something, and they live in this huge apartment. Notice how wide that hallway was? Nice for moving cameras through but a little expensive for a guy works for a publisher. We'd better not make that mistake. You know what a doctor like Bill makes today in New York City?

F.R.: No, I don't. Who cares? A hundred and fifty grand?

S.K.: I'll try and check. We're going to have to think about that orgy scene. I mean, what happens out there in that house? Arthur doesn't tell us a lot.

HAVING, it seemed, given Stanley what he wanted, I resumed the script with less anxiety. I suspected that the orgy at which Fridolin is almost murdered would offer an opportunity to indulge in the kind of elegant blue movie that Kubrick had once talked about with Terry Southern, who had been the co-screenwriter of "Dr. Strangelove." When it came to the scene with the prostitute, I thought I had to diverge from Schnitzler's gemütlich tone. In contrast to Schnitzler's sensitively forlorn girl, my New York whore was quick-tongued rather than shy, more demanding than wistful.

S.K.: Freddie? Can you talk?

F.R.: Of course.

S.K.: Because I don't like the scene with the hooker. I mean, she sounds like she's Barbra Streisand, know what I mean? The dialogue kinda goes boom-boom and a boom-boom, which I don't . . . I don't want that. How about we just follow Arthur?

F.R.: We're talking about New York City today.

S.K.: Another thing: that scene where Bill and the other guy walk away down the street. You say they're talking. What about?

F.R.: What does it matter? It's the end of the scene and they're a long way from the camera, with their backs to it.

S.K.: But what are they talking about?

F.R.: What would you like them to? They're a couple of doctors, right? So what do doctors talk about? Golf; the stock market; the tits on that nurse who's on nights . . . uh . . . holidays.

S.K.: Coupla Gentiles, right?

F.R.: That's what you wanted them to be.

S.K.: And we're a coupla Jews. What do we know about what those people talk about when they're by themselves?

F.R.: Stanley, come on, "those people"! You've heard them talking. At the next table, in the subway—

S.K.: Maybe, but I'll tell you something: they always know you're there. The Holocaust—what do you think?

F.R.: I think we probably don't have time for what I think.

S.K.: As a subject for a movie.

F.R.: It's been done a few times, hasn't it?

S.K.: I didn't know that.

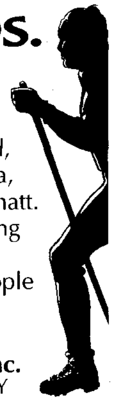
F.R.: Did you ever see a movie that Munk did—half did—called "The Passenger"?

S.K.: Wasn't that Antonioni? With Jack in it.

F.R.: The Munk came first.

S.K.: O.K., so what else is there?

F.R. (*knowing damn well what he is be-*



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ing urged to get to): Well, there's "Schindler's List," isn't there?

S.K.: Think that was about the Holocaust?

F.R.: Wasn't it? What else was it about?

S.K.: That was about success, wasn't it? The Holocaust is about six million people who get killed. "Schindler's List" was about six hundred people who don't.

KUBRICK did not seem interested in words. He might admire the sharpness of my dialogue, but it was not something he wanted to film, and film alone was his art. A great director wants to minimize whatever impedes him from using the available space—and budget—for what he regards as the heart of the matter. Kubrick left motive or "psychology" to be divined by the spectator.

I came to realize that he didn't even want the characters to have any particular personality: he would as soon have types as individuals with specific histories or sensibilities. He did not want the scenes to carry any authorial mark but his. I was there to prepare the way for him to do his stuff. Anything that was markedly mine was never the stuff he was going to do.

Stanley's patience was both polite and implacable: I could see no end to it. The writer on a movie is like someone running the first leg of a relay race. He has to set off at full speed while everyone else stands around and wonders if it's going to be worth his while to remove his tracksuit. I ran my leg, arrived exhausted, and was promptly asked to run it again and again.

TOWARD the end of March, 1995, following my usual routine, I sent the whole first draft to the William Morris office in London, asking them to have copies made and sent to Stanley, to me, and to Ron Mardigian, in California.

Sylvia and I went off for ten days to Venice and Trieste. Upon our return, I discovered in the post a fat copy of the script from the William Morris office. To my amazement, it had been jacketed in a blue folder with a brazen W.M. logo on it. Underneath was an unfat envelope with a St. Albans postmark. Inside was a single yellow sheet. It announced that Stanley was so upset—"I could scarcely believe my eyes," he wrote—at finding the script in a William Morris folder that he had put it aside rather than read it in a "negative frame of mind."

I wrote:

> DEAR STANLEY,
>
> We have just walked in the door, after a few days in Italy, and found your "letter." Great homecoming. Let me set the record straight: it is my habit, when a script is finished, to send a copy to my agents in London for forwarding to L.A.... Alas, I forgot about those bloody awful folders.... However, I cannot accept that I am forbidden to file a text with my agent as evidence of what I have done as a result of his deal-making....
>
> We all have our foibles and yours, in the present case, are both understandable and paramount.... However, I have waited in rather pathetic hope for your endorsement of the new work on the script. Instead, I find that I have committed a "crime" as inadvertent as that well-intentioned steadying of the Ark of the Covenant which led to G-d striking Uzzah dead. I always felt sorry for Uzzah; and now I find I *am* Uzzah.

Stanley's response was remarkably patient and friendly. He denied, rightly, that he had ever accused me of a crime. His dread that the source and nature of the project would become known was—I now realize from the number of calls I have since had from inquisitive journalists—well founded. Although I had assured him that there was no risk that anyone in the William Morris office had read the script, since I had never had any indication that any of them *could* read, I had underestimated the curiosity that anything to do with Kubrick was likely to excite. He was afraid that I had "compromised his deal-making and casting efforts on the film." Furthermore, he told me, "even if you don't understand why this is so," his credentials as a "producer" entitled him to more than having his concerns dismissed as "foibles." Nevertheless, he was quite ready to "put all this behind us." The fax was signed "Regards." His letters preceding the William Morris folly had always ended "Best regards."

The fact that Stanley had referred to himself as a producer prompted me to add a rider to my otherwise penitent assurances: "R.M. may bear the odious title of 'agent' but he has never broken faith with me.... I wish I could say as much of producers, executives, and directors (I have been swindled out of credit and money).... The best sentence, for me, in your letter, is 'I am quite ready to put all this behind us.' I'm for that, as you can well imagine."

Stanley's response was to say that he would read the new pages and go over the whole thing carefully. The happiest omen was that his letter was once again signed "Best regards."

WE began to make quicker progress. I had feared that the writing of this movie, which still had no title, would take longer than the Trojan War, but the stack of approved scenes grew more quickly. Concerned about the lack of a title, I faxed a suggestion: "The Female Subject." Kubrick did not acknowledge receipt. Some days later he proposed "Eyes Wide Shut." I refrained from any response except that of refraining from response. It was his movie.

Joe Mankiewicz used to say that a good script had, in some sense, already

THE WATERFALL

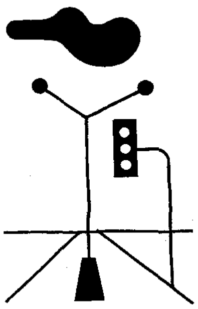
If you were to read my poems, all of them, I mean,
My life's work, at the one sitting, in the one place,
Let it be here by this halfhearted waterfall
That allows each pebbly basin its separate say,
Damp stones and syllables, then, as it grows dark
And you go home past overgrown vineyards and
Chestnut trees, suppliers once of crossbeams, moon-
Shaped nuts, flour, and rusty stuffing for mattresses,
Leave them here, on the page, in your mind's eye, lit
Like the fireflies at the waterfall, a wall of stars.

—MICHAEL LONGLEY

been directed. That is not the kind of script Kubrick would ever want. Anything too finished left him with an obligation to obedience. The only kind of rebel he was, in fact, was a rebel against being told what to do.

The fourth or fifth version of the script was blanched of nearly all the duplicity that had made it alive for me. I was now compiling a color-it-yourself book in which the spaces might have seductive outlines but were not to carry any instructions. I recalled that when Henry James finally renounced working in the theatre a friend asked him whether he could explain why his plays were flops. Were they too intellectual? James doubted it. "After all," he said, "I tried so hard to be base."

If I often longed for release, it was a matter of professional honor not to show it. It was not until the end of June that I sent off the last batch of pages for the last time. I added a chattier letter than usual. I ended by saying, "Do you know the story about the man who was having a pair of trousers made by a Jewish tailor and it was taking forever? Two months, three months, six months. Finally he said to the tailor, 'It took the good Lord six days to make the world and you it takes six months to make a pair of pants?' And the tailor said, 'So? Look at the world, and then look at this pair of pants.' Why does this story occur to me at this stage? Best regards, Freddie."



In mid-December, I received a fax from Kubrick; he had completed *his* work on the script and had cast Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman as the troubled couple. Would I be able to "come out to the house one day during the holidays," have lunch, and then sit in a room with tea and biscuits for an hour or so and read what he had been doing on the script? "Best regards, Stanley."

Once again, a cab came for me at noon. Once again, I took the devious road to the Kubrick estate.

At St. Albans, I read his draft. The longer we talked, the more there seemed to be things in the revised text that needed attention. By the end, I was reassuring Kubrick that I had no quarrel with the over-all shape. I had, after all, argued for it at great length. He asked, almost humbly, whether I was willing to go through it one more time.

"Of course I am," I said.

He seemed relieved, even grateful. I was not grateful, but I was relieved. He had digested my work, but its shape and much of its detail were there in his rescript. I understood very well, and without rancor, that he had had to possess the script—as cannibals do the force of their respected adversaries—by swallowing it. He had had to convince himself that what he would film was compatible with his artistic persona; it had, so to say, to pass through his gut.

Stanley came out onto the forecourt as my return cab approached the house through the last of the barriers.

"So listen," he said, "thanks for . . . coming out. And for everything you did."

"And will do," I said.

"Worked out pretty well, didn't it?" He put his arm around my shoulder. I was aware of the small white hand gleaming in the light from the front door. Show biz is full of insincere bear hugs; a lot of them leave teeth marks. Stanley had never been effusive. It was the first time he had done more than shake hands hurriedly. There was a wary warmth in his embrace which made it more unguarded—and more flattering—than anything he'd ever said to me.

I said, "I wouldn't have missed it, Stanley."

I got into the taxi and was driven toward the first gate. Then I realized that I didn't have his text with me. I got out and ran back to the house and rang the bell. He opened the door.

"I forgot the script."

"I have it for you."

"We could analyze that, if we wanted to," I said. "But we don't, do we?"

"I don't think so."

He smiled, and I went back to the cab and got in. I waved to him through the window as if—although I should never trade on it—we were now close friends.

I rewrote the script, several times, and I talked with him, always at length, on the telephone, but I never saw him again. ♦

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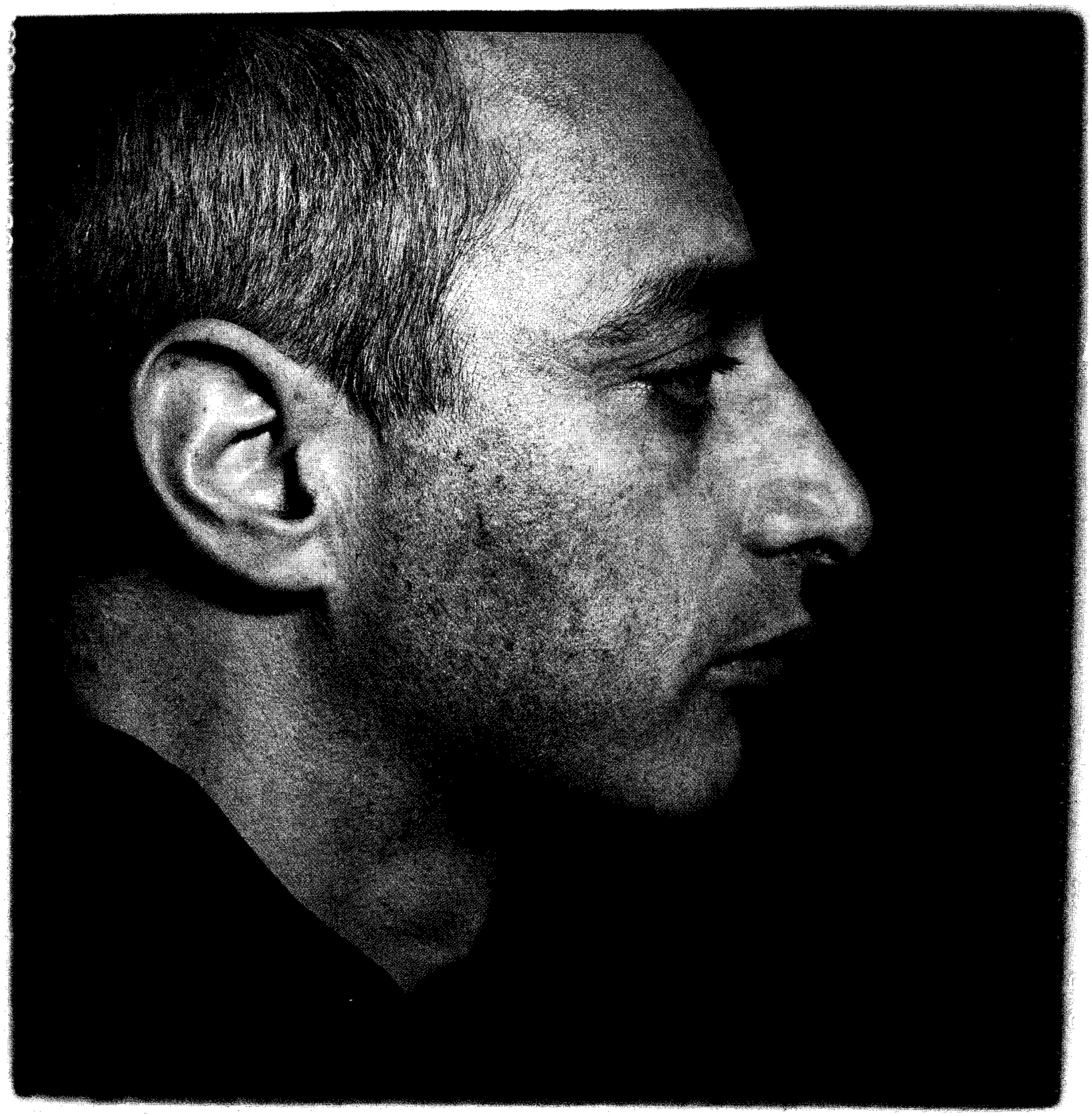


A REPORTER AT LARGE

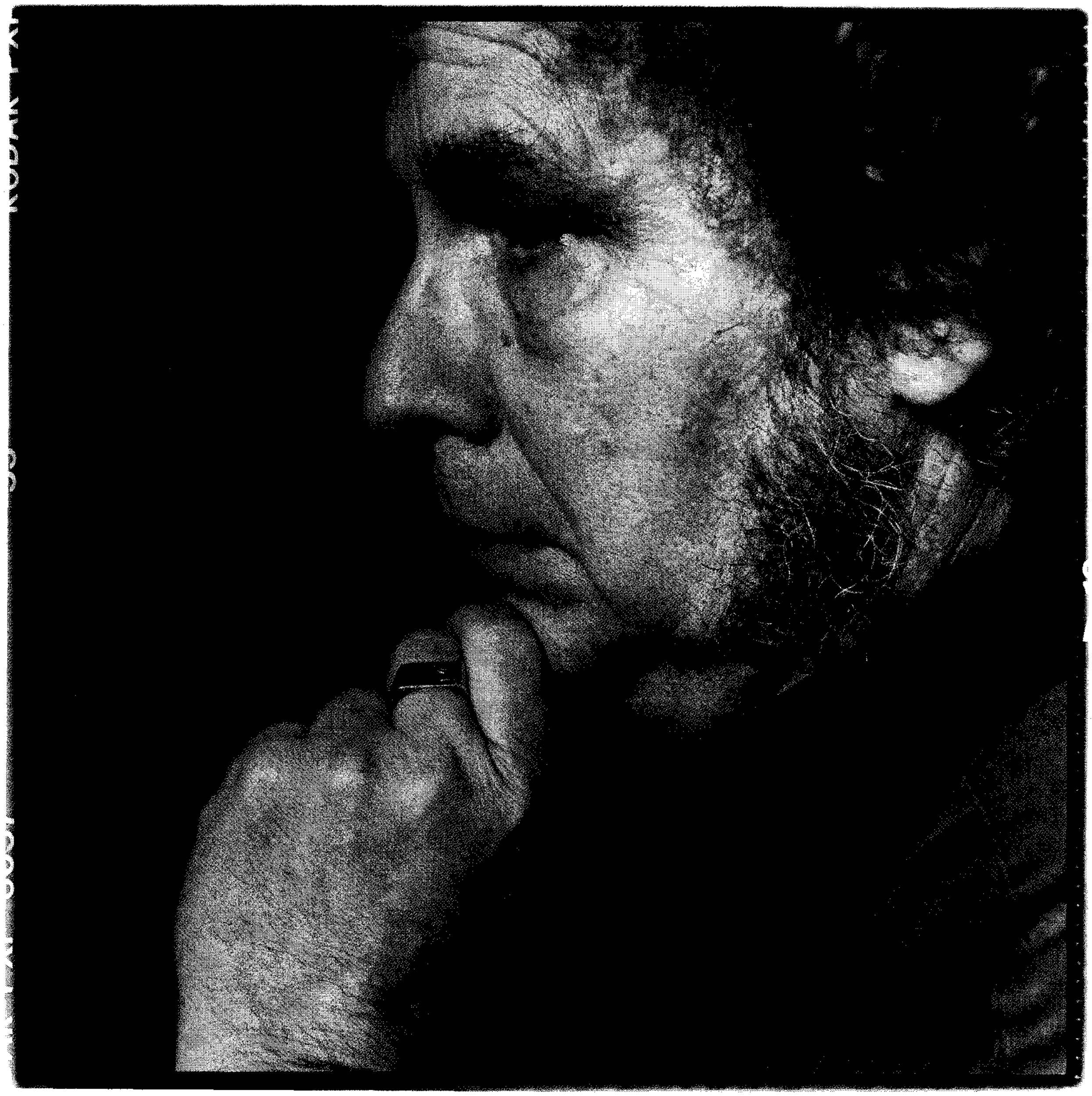
THE MEMORY THIEF

No one had ever read anything like Binjamin Wilkomirski's memoir of a small child's ordeal in the Holocaust, which was as shocking as it was incredible.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

IN an antique farmhouse in the bucolic Swiss hamlet of Amlikon, some fifty miles north of Zurich, lives a slight, almost elfin-looking man—a clarinettist, clarinet teacher, and maker of clarinets—who wears his hair in a bush of corkscrewed brown curls, and keeps his face largely obscured by the sort of billowing mutton-chop sideburns that went out of fashion with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. According to his passport, this man is Bruno Dössekker, a native of Switzerland, born on February 12, 1941. But the man says that he remembers himself to be somebody else—a Latvian Jewish Holocaust survivor, born in the early months of 1939—and he regards his Swiss identity as a legal fiction, imposed on him in the mid-forties by his foster parents, Walter Kurt and Olga Martha Dössekker, an affluent Protestant couple who found him as a young boy in a rural orphanage and reared him in their

MATRIX



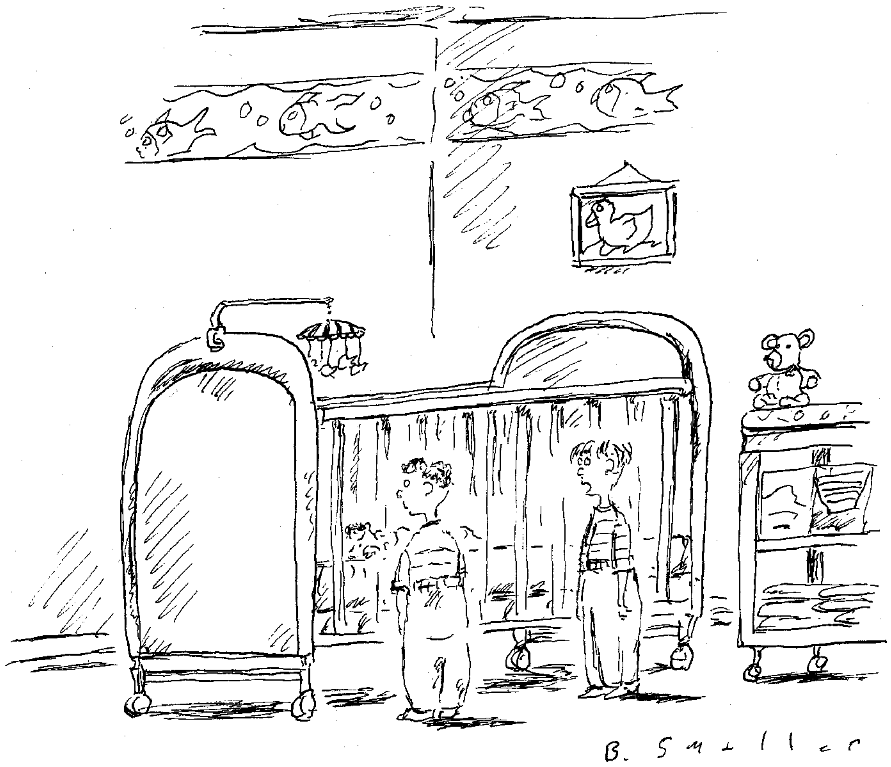
Zurich home. So his passport lists, as a second, "artist's" name, the name that he claims as his true identity: Binjamin Wilkomirski. Four years ago, as Wilkomirski, he published a book called "Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood," in which he tells a horrible story: how, as a toddler, he was made homeless by the Nazi liquidation of the Riga ghetto; how he was then separated from his family, and at the age of three or four was deported to Poland, where he endured years of savagery in the death camps; and how, after the war, he was smuggled into Switzerland, given his false identity, and brought up in Zurich, where his foster parents, teachers, and schoolmates compounded his trauma, by mocking him as a fantasist when he spoke of his memories.

"Fragments" is a slim volume of colossal cruelty. Writing from the unmediated point of view of a child too young to know much more of the world than the abomination that engulfs him—first at the Majdanek camp, near Lublin, and later at a camp that goes unnamed in the book but that he now says was Auschwitz-Birkenau—Wilkomirski assembles his "shards of memory" in a kaleidoscopic sequence of graphic traumas: at one moment he is drenched and freezing, and at the next he's scorched with thirst; here a guard smashes his head against a wall, and there he is trapped in a kennel of dogs, and swarmed over by lice and beetles; around him boys piss blood, stand in puddles of excrement to keep warm, or gnaw their own fingers to the bone to fend off hunger; one day he watches a bloody rat emerge from a dead woman's womb, and wonders, "Am I a rat or a human? . . . or can you be both at once?" The boy does experience moments of kindness and trust, but these spasms of hope are invariably betrayed by some fresh ghastliness, and only amplify his excruciation.

Wilkomirski had never written a book before. When I visited him in Amlikon a few months ago, he told me that he had

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE PYKE

"Fragments," by Binjamin Wilkomirski, above, was honored around the world. Then Daniel Ganzfried, opposite, declared it a fake.



"Oh, he's cute, all right, but he's got the temperament of a car alarm."

produced "Fragments" out of a sense of personal necessity, and that he hadn't thought of publishing it until friends persuaded him that it might help others who suffered the Holocaust as children to feel less lost. Even then, he said, "I was completely convinced that nobody would be interested—it will be in some library, and a few survivors will read it, and that's it." He was wrong. "Fragments" was a sensation: in 1995, the original, German edition was reviewed by the author of "Hitler's Willing Executioners," Daniel Goldhagen—"Even those conversant with the literature of the Holocaust will be educated by this arresting book"—and translations in twelve languages quickly followed. Wherever it appeared, reviewers honored it as a classic, disagreeing only about whether it was one of the great books of the age or of all time. Out of the wild proliferation of Holocaust memoirs and Holocaust-related fiction in recent years, Wilkomirski's depiction of an absolute naïf adrift in a realm of absolute malevolence was seized upon as a testimonial that delivered what had no longer seemed quite possible: a fresh line of vision on the century's defining moment of inhumanity.

Never before in nonfiction literature had the voice of a three- or four-year-old been expressed with such raw immediacy about anything of great import, much less about the enormity of genocide, and it was immediately clear from the response to "Fragments" that Wilkomirski's project was distinctively suited to its time. Wilkomirski was the embodiment of the purest form of victim: a child whose identity had been erased in the Holocaust, but who was condemned to remain alive—he could still speak, and bear witness, and his clipped, broken, and often breathless prose telegraphs unadulterated violation. The word "Holocaust" never appears in his memoir; indeed, he never mentions specific dates, and the historical and political context of his ordeal remains almost entirely implicit. As a child in the camps, he had no idea of time, and no way to know that what he was going through was not the universal human condition; in fact, he tells us, he did not even know what the word "mother" meant. Such bewilderment not only intensifies his suffering but also renders it eternal, because it defines his memory, and his memory is all that he has.

Wilkomirski was held in awe for his ability to evoke the existential predicament of being frozen inside the uncomprehending yet too knowing mind of a traumatized child. Maurice Sendak, the author of "Where the Wild Things Are," declared, "All children—most importantly Holocaust children—are finally vindicated. Wilkomirski explodes the inane and dangerous supposition that children are incapable of memory." Jonathan Kozol, writing in *The Nation*, sounded as if he were describing a tablet handed down from Sinai when he said that "Fragments" was "so morally important, and so free from literary artifice of any kind at all that I wonder if I even have the right to try to offer praise." Wilkomirski told me he was "completely overwhelmed by the reaction" and "could never understand what the fuss is," but he went with it. For nearly three years, beginning in 1995, he spent much of his time on the road, in Europe, Israel, and North America, giving lectures, meeting the press, and collecting prizes (a Jewish Quarterly Literary Prize in London, the Prix de Mémoire de la Shoah in Paris, and a National Jewish Book Award in New York, where fellow-finalists in the category of autobiography and memoir included Alfred Kazin and Elie Wiesel); in 1997, he was featured in a six-city fund-raising tour for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

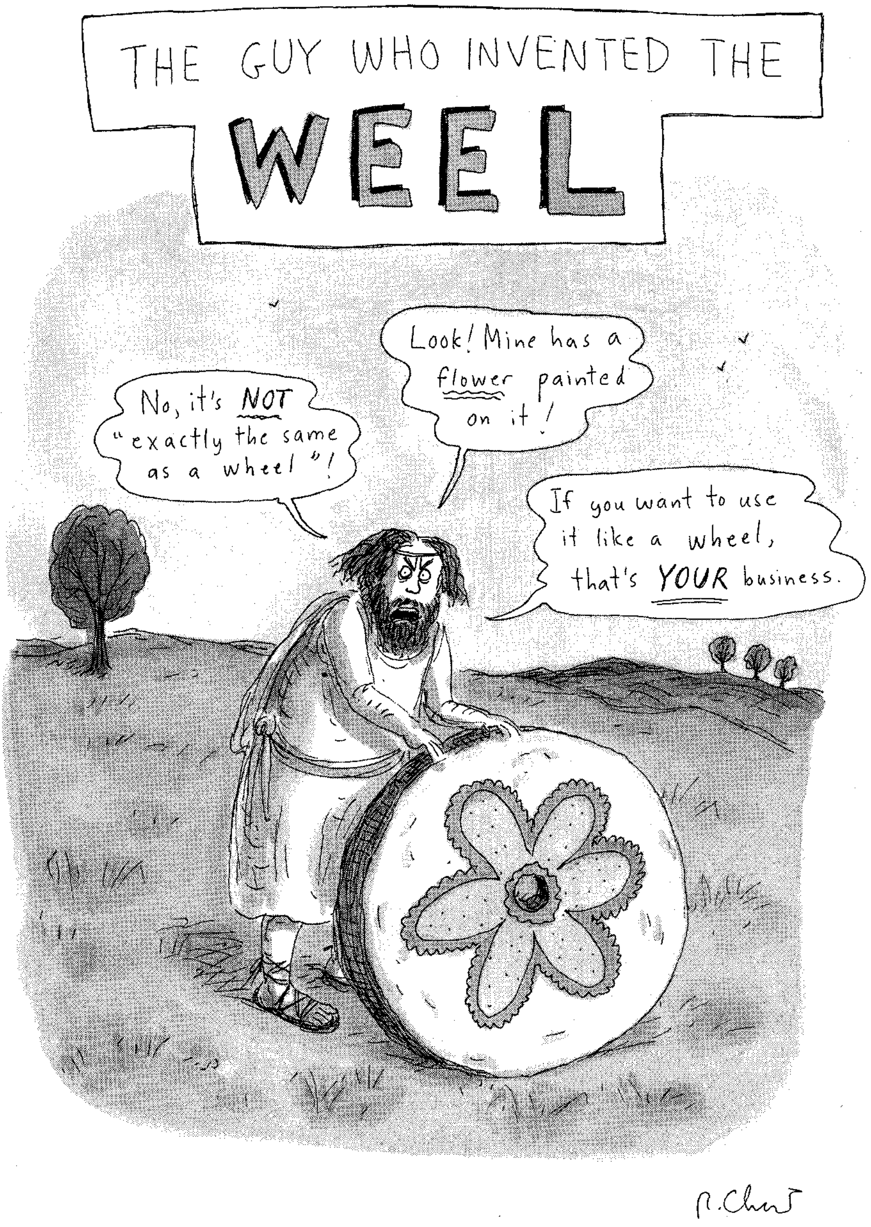
On his travels, he was joined by Verena Piller, a tall, dark-haired singer, whom he has lived with since 1982, and she sat beside him at interviews, holding his hand, or—when he burst into tears, which was often—stroking his head. Reporters remarked on how childlike and unprotected the nearly sixty-year-old author seemed. They explained that he had spent years in psychotherapy learning to give voice to his memories, because he hadn't mastered any language before his descent into hell, and for a while in the camps he had been stricken with muteness; and they told how he had spent years conducting research to fit his memories to the times and places he had no means of tracking as a child. Even so, he still didn't know his birthday, and it was only by chance that he had his name. (As he tells the story, when the Nazis deserted Auschwitz a woman saw him in a crowd of inmates, and cried, "Binjamin, oy Binjamin," then led him out of the camp and deposited him at a Jewish orphanage in Kraków, with the words "I'm bringing you the little Wilkomirski boy.")

A writer for the Baltimore *Sun* asked Wilkomirski if it was possible to go through what he had gone through and heal, and then described his response: “A look of pain crosses his face. He bows his head and falls silent for a long time. There is no sound in the room except the sound of some inner pain that threatens to find a voice and cry out. Instead, he wipes a tear from his eye.”

“He cried everywhere we brought him,” said Wilkomirski’s American publisher, Arthur H. Samuelson, of Schocken Books. “I told him if he didn’t stop crying I’d send him home. That shocked his publicist, who wasn’t Jewish. Maybe it was insensitive of me, but I’ve published Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Aharon Appelfeld—I know a lot of survivors—and one thing they have in common is they don’t cry. This guy couldn’t stop. I thought that was odd.” Still, Samuelson said it had never occurred to him that Wilkomirski might not actually be a Holocaust survivor until late last August, when a Swiss writer named Daniel Ganzfried published a report in the Zurich newspaper *Weltwoche* stating that, according to official Swiss archives, the author of “Fragments” was neither a Jew nor a Latvian but the Swiss-born son of an unwed Protestant woman, Yvonne Berthe Grosjean; that he was born on February 12, 1941 (as his passport says), and named Bruno; that he spent his entire wartime childhood in the safety of his neutral homeland, at first with his mother, and later, when she gave him up for adoption, in the orphanage where he was found by his foster parents, the Dössekkers (now deceased); that his biological father (also deceased) was known, and had paid child support for his boy until the Dössekkers, who were otherwise childless, legally adopted him, in 1957; and that when his biological mother died, in 1981, the Swiss authorities identified Bruno Dössekker as the heir to her modest estate, and he had accepted the inheritance.

DANIEL GANZFRIED, whose own first book, “The Dispatcher”—a novel based on his father’s experiences as an Auschwitz survivor—came out in German at the same time as “Fragments,” told me that after writing his exposé in *Weltwoche* he naïvely thought, “This case is closed, and now we can discuss the Holocaust and how to write about it, what is memory, what is history, what is research, what is business.” But Wilkomirski responded immediately, telling a reporter from the Zurich *Tages-Anzeiger* that he did not dispute the authenticity of the documents in his official Swiss dossier; rather, he said, he had always made it clear that he was given a new legal identity after the war, as many Holocaust orphans were. The problem of his papers had been raised when “Fragments” was about to be published, he explained, and he had addressed it, at the behest of his venerable German publisher, Suhrkamp, in an Afterword to his book. (“Legally accredited truth is one thing—the truth of a life another,” he wrote.) Beyond that, Wilkomirski told the newspaper, he had “no valid answer” to Ganzfried’s findings. “It was always the free choice of the reader to read my book as literature or to take it as a personal document,” he said. “Nobody has to believe me.”

A few days after making these remarks, Wilkomirski went to pieces. When Blake Eskin, a writer for the *Forward* who was the first American journalist to report Ganzfried’s investigation, phoned Wilkomirski for comment in early September, Verena Piller, his companion, said he was unable to talk. “He’s absolutely pushed back to the time from in the camps,” she said. One of Wilkomirski’s closest friends, an Israeli clinical psychologist named Elitsur Bernstein, was visiting him in Amlikon at the time of his breakdown, and he told me, “The picture which appeared to me was an honest psychotic case.” Wilkomirski, he


THE GUY WHO INVENTED THE
WEEL
No, it's NOT "exactly the same as a wheel"!
Look! Mine has a flower painted on it!
If you want to use it like a wheel, that's YOUR business.
R. Chast

said, “was unable to differentiate between reality and non-reality, between what is going on outside you and what is going on inside you.”

Thanks to medication, rest, and the attentions of Piller, Wilkomirski managed to avoid hospitalization, but he remained in convalescent seclusion for nearly six months, while the same newspapers and radio and television stations whose reviewers and profilers had celebrated his authenticity a few years earlier now portrayed the author as a fictional character of his own creation. Yet the original judgment of “Fragments” as a masterpiece stood largely unchallenged, and commentators tended to explain Wilkomirski’s collapse as evidence that his book, and his other activities as a survivor, could not be written off as conscious acts of fakery but should more properly be understood as expressions of the genuine conviction of a man who believed himself to be somebody that he probably was not.

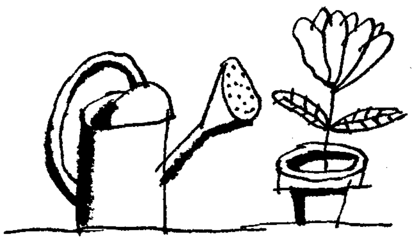
Suhrkamp, for its part, had taken a dodgy, wait-and-see position on Ganzfried’s accusations, claiming in a press release that it is not “the task of the publishing house to resolve the contradiction” between an author’s legal identity and his memory. Wilkomirski’s foreign publishers followed Suhrkamp’s lead. In early October, as pressure mounted for “Fragments” to be reclassified as fiction, or else recalled altogether, like a defective automobile, Wilkomirski issued a statement to the annual gathering of the world’s book publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair. After pronouncing the “media climate” around his case to be so poisoned by an “atmosphere of totalitarian condemnation” that serious discussion had become both “impossible” and “ridiculous,” he went on, nevertheless, to explain his position. Once again, he contended that he had resolved the enigma of his legal identity with his disclaimer in the Afterword to “Fragments,” and he said that for anyone who did not accept that his biography was unverifiable “childhood memories will never be more than just some story.”

This was the core of Wilkomirski’s defense: that a strictly factual reading of “Fragments” is inherently misguided, because it is a book of traumatic early memories, and that the broken and dislocated nature of such memories requires them to be taken on their own terms, as evidence of the trauma they record. Although this argument is circular, it still has a point. “I just wrote how these memories remain in a child’s memory. That’s all,” Wilkomirski told me. “If afterward people treat the book as if it were an adult expert’s report about the Holocaust, it’s completely stupid. But it’s their problem, not my problem.” Indeed, he had said as much in the opening pages of “Fragments”:

> If I’m going to write about it, I have to give up on the ordering logic of grown-ups; it would only distort what happened.
>
> I survived; quite a lot of other children did too. The plan was for us to die, not survive. According to the logic of the plan, and the orderly rules they devised to carry it out, we should have been dead.
>
> But we’re alive. We’re the living contradiction to logic and order.
>
> I’m not a poet or a writer. I can only try to use words to draw as exactly as possible what happened, what I saw, exactly the way my child’s memory has held on to it; with no benefit of perspective or vanishing point.

The antiheroic realization that remaining alive usually required a series of inexplicable chances, even for those who were best equipped to evade death, has been a central theme of Holocaust literature. Yet Wilkomirski was going further, arguing that survival was such an anomaly that the survivor’s existence could be represented only as otherworldly; he was signalling that he was approaching the most real of crimes from the magical perspective (as the American jacket copy says) of a Grimm’s fairy tale.

Reading “Fragments” in the light of the author’s Swiss birth record, I was struck by how carefully Wilkomirski appeared to have constructed his memoir to withstand exactly the sort of charges he now faced. Of course, that didn’t preclude the possibility that he really was a Holocaust survivor; nor, for that matter, did his birth record, since official papers—and Swiss papers, no less, in this time of Holocaust banking scandals—are never proof perfect of an identity. On the other hand, memory is also no such proof. Whoever Wilkomirski was or wasn’t he had presented his story as an article of faith, and it had been embraced in a spirit of passionate belief by many of the individuals and institutions that helped to transform Holocaust remembrance into a form of secular religion. Now those cultural arbiters who had affirmed Wilkomirski’s authenticity stood to share in his humiliation.



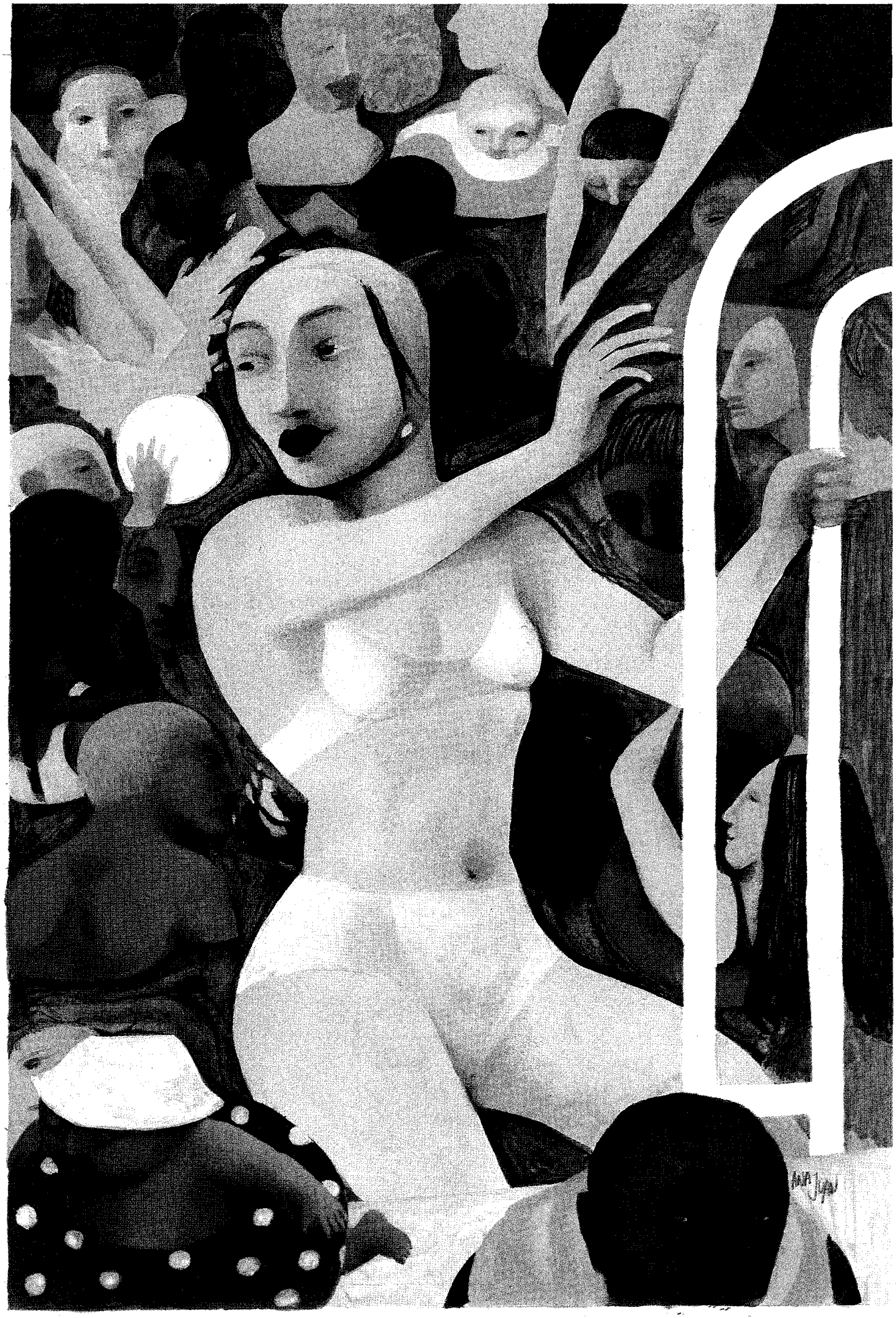
To be sure, Ganzfried, who accused Wilkomirski of having known Majdanek and Auschwitz “only as a tourist,” had allowed, in his *Weltwoche* article, that “Fragments” could “be worth talking about as a novel,” and that this “would not take away from its historical accuracy.” But where would that leave the author and his supporters? When I called Wilkomirski’s American translator and editor, Carol Brown Janeway, she told me, “I only know that the man I’ve worked with is entirely consistent from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. If it turned out that he was not who he says he is, then he would be in the most profound sense a man without an identity.” Janeway, who works at Knopf but arranged for “Fragments” to be brought out by Schocken, because of that imprint’s reputation as a source of Jewish literature, also said, “If we abandoned him, and he did something to himself, and then the accusations proved false, where would we be?”

Arthur Samuelson was more circumspect. “My position is I’d like to know what the truth is,” he said, “and I’m prepared for the possibility that the truth may be more interesting than the story he told.”

To question Wilkomirski’s identity was to reprise one of his book’s dominant themes: the plight of a victim who finds that his memories are doubted and dismissed. In fact, when Wilkomirski renounces “the ordering logic of grown-ups,” he is not only telling his readers, “You must believe me,” he is also issuing a warning: “To disbelieve me is to participate in my further victimization.” But is there any reason to trust a man in his late fifties, who speaks of his “child’s memory” as if it existed, unintruded upon by intervening experience, like an old movie reel, waiting only for a projector?

“As a child, what is fixed in your mind is mostly what impressed you. You don’t have a rationale for remembering,” the writer Norman Manea told me late

SKETCHBOOK BY ANA JUAN



last year. Manea, who is a Romanian and a Jew and lives in New York, was five years old in 1941, when he was deported with his family to a concentration camp in Trans-Dniestria. He remained there for four years, and he said, "I remember it incoherently. I cannot go in a straight line, in an epic story, this then that. I have vivid memories: when my grandparents died; when my sister was sick; a fight for a piece of bread; begging; some cruelties. The first night that we were there, after two days in the train, we were taken out and some Romanian soldiers began to kill and to rob everyone. Some people jumped in the river."

Manea had read "Fragments" when it first appeared, and he said, "It doesn't work as a novel or as nonfiction, but this is the quality I was susceptible to, because there is not the coherence of literature to this book. You don't have the mind of the artist. So this incoherence felt like a kind of authenticity to me." Yet, despite Wilkomirski's explicit repudiation of artifice, and his ambition to present a narrative composed of pure memory, his book does have a design. Almost from the beginning, scenes from the war and the camps are intercut with scenes from the boy's life after the war, in the Jewish orphanages of Kraków, on the journey to Switzerland, in a Swiss orphanage, and then with his foster parents and at school in Zurich. This carefully engineered structure serves to reinforce one of the book's most extraordinary claims: that just as when he was in the camps he ceased to understand that there was a world beyond the barbed wire, so, too, when he finally leaves the camps he does not understand that he has been liberated.

It is only in the final chapter of "Fragments," when Wilkomirski is finishing high school and he sees a documentary film that shows American troops liberating the Mauthausen camp, that he realizes, "Nobody ever told me the war was over. . . . Nobody ever said right out to me: Yes, the camp was real, but now it's over." Until then, he has thought, "The camp's still there—just hidden and well disguised." So when his foster mother takes him into the cellar and shows him the coal furnace, he perceives a child-size crematorium; and when, as a young schoolboy, he is called upon to identify a picture of the Swiss hero, William Tell, in his famous pose—with a bow and arrow, facing a boy with an apple on his head—he stares "in horror" at the image, and says, "I see an SS man, and he's shooting at children." When the teacher, bewildered, asks him to explain himself, Wilkomirski comes unglued, stammering about the camps as the teacher appears to him to transmogrify into his old block warden from Majdanek, and his mind spins out a hallucinatory fantasia, in which school and camp are conflated, until he imagines the "teacher-warden" handing him over to William Tell to be taken out into the courtyard and shot.

Manea had heard that Wilkomirski began writing his memories in the course of psychotherapy, and he suggested, "Even if the Holocaust story is true, the memory is an approximation—something that was fictionalized and mixed with a lot of stuff that was put in his mind in the next forty years." When I mentioned the William Tell episode, he said, "This is culture getting in the way." As Manea understood it, "You have a therapy, then you have notes from this therapy, and then you have a literary agent, editors, publishers—and so you have a product. Somewhere in there is the man, who is now the author, but just where is maybe not so clear anymore." Under the circumstances, he proposed, if Wilkomirski had called his book "fragments from a therapy," he could have avoided the current controversy. "It could still be nonfiction, but much more honest," Manea said, "and the book would be the real thing, even if it is a delusion."

AROUND the time of my conversation with Manea, I came across a photograph of a group of very feeble-looking, very small children sitting, with their seemingly gigantic heads shaved, amid the debris of Auschwitz after the camp was liberated. One need only look for an instant at such images to wonder whether forgetting might not be a kinder curse than remembering. So I sent Wilkomirski an E-mail, saying, among other things, "I am interested to know more about your own writing of the book, the process of inward and outer searching that led you to recover the memories of your childhood." He answered:

> RECOVERED MEMORY means to re-discover through therapy, lost things of your unconscious memory. And that is in my case ABSOLUTELY WRONG. Never in my life have I forgotten what I wrote in my book. I had NOTHING TO RE-DISCOVER again! Some of the memories have been, and are still now, present every single day!! When I was a youngster, especially at the beginning of high school, I spent hours and hours on free afternoons, at a secret place in our garden, loudly speaking and repeating all I could remember. I was then afraid to forget things . . . I felt extremely unhappy. I wanted to go where I came from. I wanted to go back to Poland, to cross Poland, to go home into the birchwoods of the Baltics! . . . Of course, later, I tried to push down unbearable parts of my memory, which were repeated almost every night in

"Memo to self: 'Feathers?'"

MAYFLIES

In sombre forest, when the sun was low,
I saw from unseen pools a mist of flies
In their quadrillions rise
And animate a ragged patch of glow
With sudden glittering—as when a crowd
Of stars appear
Through a brief gap in black and driven cloud,
One arc of their great round-dance showing clear.

It was no muddled swarm I witnessed, for
In entrechats each fluttering insect there
Rose two steep yards in air,
Then slowly floated down to climb once more,
So that they all composed a manifold
And figured scene,
And seemed the weavers of some cloth of gold,
Or the fine pistons of some bright machine.

Watching those lifelong dancers of a day
As night closed in, I felt myself alone
In a life too much my own,
More mortal in my separateness than they—
Unless, I thought, I had been called to be
Not fly or star
But one whose task is joyfully to see
How fair the fiats of the caller are.

—RICHARD WILBUR

> nightmares. I wanted to live a cheerful life like my comrades. . . . Only later in my life, when I was about forty to fifty, after a long health crisis, I got aware that I did not really live, I was only copying life, copying the life of others, I did not live truly, I only played life. Then I was ready for the first time to write down part after part of my memories.

Wilkomirski signed off with the words "I am exhausted of always talking and writing about these things, trying to correct all the misunderstandings and misinterpretations—and until now, mostly in vain." I was glad to be corrected. With the image of those moon-headed Auschwitz children before me, I did not want to accept that anyone would wish to make believe that he was one of them.

Of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis, more than a million were children. There was no special Nazi policy concerning Jewish children; they were killed, like other Jews, because they were Jews. But the camp overseers who selected inmates for work as slave laborers, or as gas-chamber and crematorium tenders, considered children to be useless. So, as a rule, Jewish children were slaughtered, like the majority of Jewish adults, on, or shortly after, their arrival at the camps, and few survived for long in the six main extermination camps, which included Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau. This is what troubled the historian Saul Friedländer when he read "Fragments," immediately after it was published. Friedländer, a professor at U.C.L.A. who has been one of the pioneers in drawing on the memories of Holocaust survivors in the writing of rigorously factual history, said he never had read a memoir of such violence before, and he kept wondering how Wilkomirski could have survived. But then, he said, "In all this chaos, notwithstanding the organization, it's possible that by some wild chance this small grain of dust could have blown through untouched."

Friedländer is no stranger to unlikely stories. As he recounts in his memoir, "When Memory Comes," he himself was adopted as a boy by a French Catholic family, and learned that he was a Jew only when he decided to train for the priesthood and a compassionate clergyman informed him that his parents had been murdered at Auschwitz. In fact, nearly all the Holocaust survivors who are alive today were young during the early forties; and in the past decade, when the particular ordeal of children has emerged as one of the hottest topics in Holocaust scholarship, the capriciousness of individual destiny in that time of extremity has become more obvious.

Yet, even as the experience of this last generation of direct witnesses is scrutinized from the perspective of diverse disciplines, there remains a stratum of "child survivors"—as many as two thousand people, according to the survivors' organization Amcha, in Jerusalem—about whose early histories next to nothing is known. The great majority of these "children without identity," as they are called, made it through the war years like Saul Friedländer, disguised as Christians, or in hiding. While some have gone on living as Christians, never learning, or learning only much later, as in the case of Madeleine Albright, that they were Jews, this is a very different drama from the special anguish of those who have lived for half a century knowing only that they do not know quite who they are.

Wilkomirski's originality lay in lending a voice to this predicament. He had made the memory of oblivion into a cause, and he seemed determined to transform the loss of identity into an identity in its own right.

WILKOMIRSKI is a moody man, quick to anger and prone to long spells of paralyzing desolation: he is a frantic chain-smoker; he walks with a skittish gait, and his eyes, too, are skittish; everything in his presence broadcasts alienation. Yet when it comes to seeking confirmation of his time in hell he is a tireless believer in possibility. In his interviews and public appearances following the publication of "Fragments," he always said that he could not have arrived in Switzerland until late in 1947. But after Daniel Ganzfried disclosed last summer that the boy called Bruno Grosjean had moved in with his foster parents, the Dössekkers, in October of 1945, Wilkomirski announced that he had lately learned, through his extensive contacts with Holocaust sur-

"It says, 'All photographic-reproduction rights reserved by National Geographic Society.' "

vivors, that he could have arrived in Switzerland by then. He does not find it odd that he so quickly shifted the scene of his life between the ages of five and seven from a Kraków orphanage to a bourgeois Zurich home. "I see that with other child survivors," he told me. "They must always be ready to change their ideas when they find some different historical aspects or facts or things."

By the time we met, I had spoken with a number of his admirers, who said that, even if Binjamin Wilkomirski was a figment of the imagination of Bruno Grosjean / Dössekker, he was not a conscious deceiver but, rather, a victim of his own sense of victimization. I found it hard to fathom how such an elaborate delusion could be wholly unconscious. But when I listened to Wilkomirski juggle the dates of his arrival in Switzerland it appeared clear that if he'd set out to pull off a hoax he couldn't have done a worse job of it, since he might have expected that his official record would someday be discovered, and he could, at least, have made his story square better with the evidence in his file. In fact, he hadn't even bothered to look in his dossier, because he simply didn't consider whatever was in it to have anything to do with him.

Whether Wilkomirski was a fact or a fiction, his memory was the only document that mattered to him. When I asked him if he considered himself to have an unusual memory, he said, "Maybe, probably, yes." And when I asked him if he ever doubted his memories he said, "No." So when I asked him if he doubted official records the answer had to be "Yes," and it was. "No matter what they say, or what they constructed—legal or not legal, half-legal papers—this is all shit for me," he said. "I know that I can trust my memory. *Basta.*"

But at one point, when I inquired about the method of his mnemonics, he told me, "I just happen to be a historian, too." Although he has no academic degree in history, in the mid-sixties he did conduct research with the idea of writing a graduate thesis on the movements of European Jewish refugees fleeing Hitler's Reich. "I studied history," Wilkomirski said, "not to be a historian but only because I said, 'One day it will help me to understand my own history better.' "

We spent an afternoon chatting by the fire in the living room of his farmhouse in Amlikon, which is decorated with many Jewish objects—silver menorahs, images of Jerusalem, Sabbath candlesticks, and various hangings inscribed in Hebrew. Later, Wilkomirski took me upstairs. There, two large rooms, lined and elbowed with bookshelves, and clogged with filing cabinets, computers, a microfilm reader, and video monitors, are devoted to his archive: a remarkably extensive library and computer database of Judaica, Holocaust history, and testimonies, including thousands of letters, manuscripts, photographs, drawings from memory, and other diverse documents that he has collected, over the years, from survivors.

Wilkomirski told me bitterly that Daniel Ganzfried had described this archive as a "laboratory" for the invention of memory. He bristles at Ganzfried's name, but he doesn't entirely reject the laboratory analogy. He speaks of his historical research as a "control" on his memory. "Knowing that it's not possible to have living proof of your memory," he told me, he found that studying "scientific works" on the Holocaust offered the calming "possibility" of finding "the historical center" of his own past. Yet, he said, he was "never able really to read" the memoirs of others. "I just went through like this, just to look like this." His fingers flipped through the air, turning imaginary pages and pausing to point at imaginary passages, and he asked, "Is there something that looks familiar to me? If it didn't, then no."

In his own memoir, of course, Wilkomirski suffers terribly from those who say "no" to his story. To feel silenced by those who do not wish to hear is a well-known source of anguish among survivors of the Holocaust, and Wilkomirski told me that by constantly imploring him to hush up about his memories his foster parents had done "one of the wrongest things they could do." Despite his reverence for remembrance, Wilkomirski's own memories are often indistinguishable from grudges, and he doesn't have a kind word to say for the Dössekkers. Although they put him through music school, supported him in his early days as a clarinettist, and ultimately left him an inheritance that made him wealthy, he speaks of them not as his benefactors but as the perpetuators of his wartime destruction.

"He's an ungrateful person," Wilkomirski's high-school girlfriend, Annie Singer, told me when I visited her elegant apartment in Zurich. Singer, a pianist and teacher of musical theory, remembers their four years together as a happy time of adolescent privilege, and describes the Dössekker home as showing every sign of being "normal." Wilkomirski says that he was just pretending to get along, and not always successfully. He told me that he once beat a fellow high-school student senseless because the boy reminded him of a Nazi. "He was very tall, very strong, and with a very fat face, and he had a very dirty smile, and suddenly I remembered, 'I know this smile,' and I remembered, 'That's the smile that kills people, a smile that does not respect the life of others.' And then I exploded." Wilkomirski added that the boy had to spend three weeks in the hospital.

Singer had never heard of this fight, but she did recall that when Wilkomirski was about eighteen he showed her "a picture book about the Holocaust" that was being passed around in school. Singer had attended confirmation classes with Wilkomirski, and she told me, "We didn't know much about Jews, and we didn't really speak about this book. But at the same time he began to say that he came from the Baltic states." Singer didn't believe him then, and she doesn't believe him now. "He was a liar," she said, "yet not all the time. When he told you something, there was always a fifty-per-cent probability that it was true and fifty per cent that it was not. When he was found out in a lie, it was very interesting. He always admitted it at once. If you asked why, he'd say, 'That was just a moment that came over me.' "

Not long after he split up with Annie Singer, Wilkomirski got involved with another young woman of similar background—upper-crust Swiss Protestant—and when she became pregnant he married her. The marriage lasted seventeen years, and produced two sons and a daughter. Today, Wilkomirski speaks of them as his "ex-family," and he maintains contact with only one son. He said he found fatherhood difficult, because the sight of his children always stirred up his own painful memories. In "Fragments," after he describes the bloody rat emerging from the woman's corpse, he recalls that "many years later," when he watched his wife give birth to their first child, he was shocked by the emergence of the infant's hairy head. "And once again," he writes, "like an echo from before, I heard the ringing and crackling noise in my chest."

During the early years of his marriage, in addition to giving concerts and teaching the clarinet, Wilkomirski began studying the history of Nazism and the Jews, and in 1968 he visited Poland to do research for his graduate thesis. "When I was not watched," he said, "I looked for something for me." But in the Communist, anti-Semitic Poland of that time he felt that his inquiries only made him suspect—"as an Israeli spy or something crazy, you know." He did not feel much better understood at home. He told me that when he once tried to speak "a little bit" to his wife about his memories she immediately started to cry. "That I couldn't stand," he said. He began to tremble, and his voice rose and hardened to a bark. "That was absolutely impossible." I was perplexed, since Wilkomirski himself is prone to tears, and several times in our talk stopped to choke back a sob. "Uh-uh, uh-uh," he went on. "I can't

LEON'S AUTO SALVAGE
AND CENTER FOR INTERPRETIVE DANCE
DIFFEE

SKETCHBOOK BY HA

stand when people start to cry. So I took it right back. I said, 'No, no. It was not so bad as you think,' and 'O.K., let's not talk about it anymore.' "

It wasn't until he left his family, Wilkomirski said, that he met "someone who was ready to listen without crying, just to listen and to listen a hundred times to the same story, so I got more confident." Verena Piller came into Wilkomirski's life toward the end of 1982, when he was recuperating from a period of illness. On one of their first evenings together, they watched a documentary on television about the trial of S.S. officers who had served at Majdanek. Piller was impressed when she saw how Wilkomirski "became like a stone." He was impressed when he saw that she could take it.

By then, Wilkomirski had settled in an apartment on Asylstrasse, in Zurich, and was pursuing his background through contact with Jews and the study of Holocaust history. In the autumn of 1979, he had met and become friends with Elitsur Bernstein, the Israeli psychologist who would accompany him on much of his midlife journey into the past. Bernstein, who had been living in Switzerland for nearly twenty years, first came to the apartment on Asylstrasse because he wanted to study the clarinet. Wilkomirski told me that during one of their first lessons Bernstein pointed to a picture on the wall and asked, "Who's always looking with such a strong look at me?" Wilkomirski had recently bought the picture—a nineteenth-century portrait of the rabbi of the Lithuanian town of Wilkomir—and when he told Bernstein, he said, his student "got completely excited and he asked me to allow him to call his father, in Israel." It turned out that Bernstein's father had grown up in Lithuania, where he had studied as a boy with this very rabbi. "So his family had this connection and he thought it was something," Wilkomirski told me, adding, "It was the beginning."

ELITSUR BERNSTEIN is as solidly ursine a man as Wilkomirski is birdishly slight. His handshake is hearty, and his head is massive and draped with a graying reddish beard that fans out over the middle of his chest. His brow is high and wide, and his hair is pushed back from it in a way that makes it appear even higher and wider. He looks Russian, as in Tolstoy. He is a therapist, and he smokes a pipe. In 1982, when he was in his mid-forties, he moved back to Israel, and he received me in the room where he sees patients at the institute he co-directs, in a pleasant corner of the generally shabby Tel Aviv suburb of Rishon LeZion.

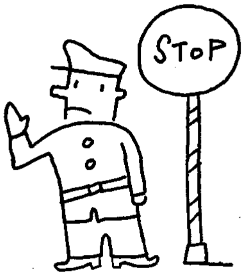
Wilkomirski had been eager for me to meet Bernstein, so I was surprised when one of the first things he said to me was that if he had known, when he took up the clarinet twenty years ago, that he would now be entangled in the crisis of Wilkomirski's identity he would have run the other way. But then, Bernstein also said, "It's a very interesting story." He called his former teacher his best friend, and the story he told me of their friendship was the story of how, through a lengthy collaborative process of trial and error, he had helped Bruno Dössekker to become Binjamin Wilkomirski.

Bernstein began with the portrait on Wilkomirski's wall, but in his version the two men's roles were reversed. He said that he had recognized the picture from photographs his father had shown him. "I told him it could be the last rabbi of Wilkomir," Bernstein said, and he added that he was astonished to see his teacher turn pale, and to hear him say that his name might be not Dössekker but Wilkomirski. Bernstein recalled that he didn't pursue the matter. "As a psychologist," he said, "I knew that if I meet people who are not my clients, and they know that I am a psychologist, and I ask questions, it is a big risk, because I didn't want to deal with their problems. I wanted to play the clarinet."

After about six months of lessons, Wilkomirski told Bernstein that he required surgery for "some stomach problems." Bernstein visited him in the hospital. He said he found Wilkomirski alone in his room, still under anesthetic, "in a delirium—totally unconscious." And then, Bernstein said, he began to talk. "He said some words in German, and some mathematical formula, and then he said some words in Yiddish." Bernstein was amazed. Yiddish is one of his "mother tongues," and he spoke Swiss German as well, and he said he knew what he was hearing. He listened as Wilkomirski "said in Yiddish something like 'Leave me alone,' 'No, no, no, I don't want,' " and then he left without disturbing the patient. A few days later, Bernstein returned to the hospital, and told his friend of his Yiddish outburst. Wilkomirski, Bernstein said, "didn't react well. He didn't react with words, but he reacted with gestures and expressions." Bernstein cringed and recoiled in his chair, imitating Wilkomirski.

Two months later, Wilkomirski was again hospitalized, this time for a blood disease. He explained to me that he had suffered from a kind of leukemia, and later from a disease called thrombocytopenia, which caused him to "bleed all the time." He poked the thumb of one hand against the heel of his other hand, and said, "When I pressed like this, blood came out. I was too thin, and I lost about forty-seven kilos, and then they discovered a tumor on my spleen, and they had to operate on that." He said he had required hospitalization for one affliction or another every year for ten years, and he suggested that his illnesses might be the aftereffects of medical experiments performed on him by Nazi doctors at Auschwitz.

When Bernstein visited Wilkomirski after his second operation, there was a Yiddish-English dictionary on his night table. Wilkomirski acknowledged Bernstein's curious glances at the book, explaining that he wanted to "refresh" his Yiddish. As usual, Bernstein said he didn't ask Wilkomirski any questions, but a few months later he and his wife invited Wilkomirski to join them on a Friday evening for Sabbath dinner. "He put a yarmulke on his head and he tried to take part as much as he could, but he couldn't very much," Bernstein recalled, adding, "He was totally ignorant of Jewish things."



So far, Bernstein had spoken as if he were a neutral scientific observer of the Wilkomirski phenomenon, with no sense of his own agency in the case history he was presenting. But now he hopscotched ahead to his own return to Israel in 1982; Wilkomirski had come to visit right away, and Bernstein said, "I think it might be that our friendship made him a little bit more kosher for Jewish society." I said that it must have also been very encouraging for Wilkomirski to be accepted by a Jew. "But not absolutely unquestioningly," Bernstein replied; he told me that he had once introduced Wilkomirski to his father, an Orthodox Jew, who asked, "How do you know that you are a Jew?" and Wilkomirski answered, cryptically, "I think so."

In the summer of 1991, Bernstein was visiting Switzerland, and Wilkomirski told him of a dream "about a huge group of people near a barrack, and shooting, and something like that, and a big fire and so on." Wilkomirski said he had such nightmares constantly, and both Bernstein and Verena Piller, who was being kept awake at night by Wilkomirski's thrashing and shouting in his sleep, advised him to look for a therapist. Piller also suggested that it might help Wilkomirski to get his dreams and his memories out of his system if he wrote them down. Bernstein told his friend that this was often a useful exercise. Wilkomirski followed their advice. Therapy, he told me, provided the secure environment he was seeking, in which to "find words" for the memories that terrified him, and to sort out the jumble of "preverbal" images in his mind—"to see a subject clear, and to see whether I have a memory, or two, three memories overlapping, and to separate what doesn't belong together."

At two o'clock one morning in September of 1991, Bernstein was awakened by the ringing of his fax machine, and when he went to his study he found the first pages of the text that eventually became "Fragments." Bernstein said that he phoned Wilkomirski shortly after daybreak, "And I told him it would be terrible if—*if* those papers contained something that he had gone through." Wilkomirski asked, "Should I write more?"

Bernstein said, "If it brings you relief." Wilkomirski said it did, and that he was also writing so that his children could know where he came from.

SINCE "Fragments" was published, Wilkomirski and Bernstein have shared the billing at several psychotherapy conferences in Vienna as the authors of a paper on the historical verification of early traumatic memories, which contends that "the question of whether there is actual truth in the client's early-childhood memories is irrelevant for the psychotherapist." (A critical discussion of their ideas was posted for a time at a Web site called StopBadTherapy.com.) Nevertheless, Bernstein told me that he had his doubts as Wilkomirski's manuscript kept coming over his fax machine—"in intervals of two or three weeks, seven, eight, nine, eleven pages." So, early in 1992, he finally asked his friend, "Are you sure that these are your memories?"

Wilkomirski said he was sure, and that he'd never forgotten, but that therapy had allowed him to speak of what had long remained inchoate. In fact, Bernstein told me, therapy enabled Wilkomirski to explore moments of his past so primordial that they had been imprinted on his senses only as "body memories." This psychological term of art refers to a phenomenon that is also sometimes spoken of as "implicit memory," whereby a somatic trigger, or a particular quality of light, or a sound or smell, functions—like Proust's taste of the legendary madeleine—to open to consciousness a previously lost world. In addition to his writings, Wilkomirski made sketches and paintings of the images that bedevilled him.

In the summer of 1993, when Bernstein and his wife and two sons went with Wilkomirski and Piller to Poland, Wilkomirski took along a map of the Majdanek camp which he said he had drawn from memory. Bernstein recalled the hours spent with Wilkomirski at Majdanek, and a few days later at Auschwitz-Birkenau, as "not only amazing" but also "quite a traumatic experience." He said, "Something streamed out of him in Poland." When they visited the camps, "It was impossible to follow him physically, because he ran, like a madman, although not mad in psychological terms. He was like in a trance, and he went from one part to the other part." Despite his excitement, Wilkomirski failed to discover any new evidence of his childhood, but both he and Bernstein returned from their pilgrimage more determined than ever to fill in the blanks of his identity.

A few months later, in Israel, Bernstein presented Wilkomirski to a group of Jews who had survived the war as children in Poland. The survivors gathered around with photograph albums and lists of names, eager to help Wilkomirski figure out who he might be and where he might be from. He couldn't make any connections, but the occasion proved useful because it brought Wilkomirski together with a highly animated middle-aged woman named Leah Balint, who explained that she specialized in helping "children without identity" search for their past. During the war, Balint herself had been hidden as a child in a Polish monastery; she was the widow of a lawyer who had specialized in securing reparations for Holocaust survivors; and, she told me when I visited her at her home in Jerusalem, for some time before she met Wilkomirski she had been in the habit of attending "all the meetings of child Holocaust survivors." So Balint knew the terrain. "I'm experienced with this," she said. "I can immediately tell if it's right." And when she saw Wilkomirski she recognized the real thing. "He looked very miserable," she said. "It was such a pity, because he was so lost." She told him, "I will help you."

"Todd has been an eager participant in our sex-education program."

BALINT had introduced herself to Wilkomirski and Bernstein as a historian who worked at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and research center, in Jerusalem, although she worked there only in the sense that she made regular use of its library and archives. Shortly after she met Wilkomirski, Balint signed a contract with Israel Television to serve as a consultant for a documentary film on survivors who had lost their original identities. That film, "Wanda's Lists," is immensely affecting, not least because it chronicles Balint's success, through a mix of archival investigation and field work in Poland, in unearthing traces of the identities of several middle-aged men and women, and in orchestrating one woman's reunion with the family that had reared her during the war. Yet these stories are shadowed from start to finish by the incongruous presence of Wilkomirski, whose quest for clues to his past consistently proves fruitless.

Watching "Wanda's Lists," you feel the filmmakers' fascination with Wilkomirski. The other central characters approach even the most convincing evidence of their origins with skepticism, preferring the prospect of living with the oblivion that torments them to the risk of embracing an inaccurate version of themselves. Wilkomirski says, however, "I remember things like a film." He recites scenes that readers of "Fragments" will recognize in almost identical detail, and he eagerly seeks his reflection in every corner of historical possibility which comes before him. Wilkomirski is shown, at one point, playing a sort of klezmer tune on his clarinet and later, in video footage shot by one of Bernstein's sons, swaying through the ruins of Majdanek wearing a yarmulke and carrying his memory map. In contrast to the poised and unsentimental certainty of uncertainty that governs the survivors around him, his meandering movements, wincing eyes, and bewildered, groping recitations of his memories have a strangely comforting familiarity; this, we know, is how a "rememberer" looks in a movie.

In one scene, a woman who survived in Poland as a hidden child is presented with a photograph of her mother, and says, "I never saw her in my life." Wilkomirski, on the other hand, says of Majdanek, "It's strange to say so, but for me it's like coming home." By the end of the film, all the other main stories have been wrapped up, with adult survivors in possession of more of their identities than they were at the beginning, but Wilkomirski appears to have spiralled back into childhood and oblivion. "Even the name Wilkomirski is in doubt," an announcer intones.

That doubt did not trouble a woman named Sara Lerner, who, after watching Wilkomirski on television, believed she saw an astonishing likeness of her sister, who had been murdered, with her baby son Binjamin, at Majdanek. Lerner phoned her sister's widower, Yaakov Maroko, and told him that she thought she'd just seen his long-lost son. Maroko, an ultra-Orthodox Jew, who had remarried after the war and fathered a large family, was overcome with emotions, chiefly joy. He got in touch with Wilkomirski, and as the two men shared memories by phone and letter between Israel and Switzerland each became convinced that he had found a missing part of himself.

In mid-1995, a year after "Wanda's Lists" was shown, Israel Television ran a follow-up film. Once again, it was Wilkomirski's story that dominated, and this time it promised to be a drama of a father and son reunited. Because Wilkomirski believed himself to be a Latvian who had lost four or five brothers and Yaakov Maroko was a Pole whose lost son had been his only child, the two men had agreed to submit to a DNA test to establish that their father-son bond was based on more than desire and emotion.

"I came, I bought, I subdivided."

• •

Wilkomirski gave blood in Switzerland, and Maroko gave blood in Israel. In the film, Maroko is then shown at home, weeping as he clutches a letter he has written to Wilkomirski, from which he reads the words "My dear baby." Finally, Maroko, his wife, and several of their children huddle before the camera in a doctor's office to hear what the blood has to say. The doctor pronounces that the test was negative; there is no father-son relationship. The camera jolts and there is a loud clatter; a soundman from Israel Television, overcome with shock, has dropped his equipment. "It's biologically impossible," the doctor says. "There's no creation ex nihilo."

But Maroko's attitude is: science-schmience. He has compared Wilkomirski's picture with his dead wife's photograph, and it's clear to him that Wilkomirski is his son; what's more, his rabbis tell him that he cannot be mistaken. And soon we see Maroko, surrounded by scores of family members and well-wishers, in the arrivals terminal of the Tel Aviv airport to welcome the miraculous return of the boy who was for half a century presumed to have been snuffed out in Hitler's crusade. Cheers greet Wilkomirski, who appears in a flowing silk shirt, draped in a batik scarf, with a yarmulke pinned to his curls and Piller at his side, as he falls into the arms of a sobbing Maroko. "Your brother, your brother," Maroko chants, thrusting Wilkomirski toward a group of black-hats.

"I felt so much love coming to me—and I felt immediately it was like the family I always wanted," Wilkomirski tells the camera. "We found out we had so many memories from these places. The biological thing is in the background. He looked for his son; I was looking for a father."

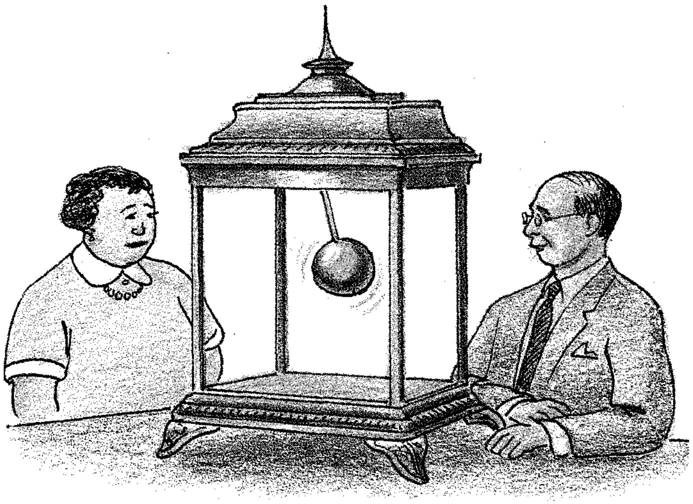
In Philip Roth's novel "Operation Shylock," the first-person narrator, who is also called Philip Roth, recounts a conversation he has had with the Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld in Jerusalem, in which Appelfeld told of meeting a highly educated Frenchwoman "who had been discovered as a newborn infant in a Paris churchyard only months before the Allies liberated the city in 1944," and had been "raised by foster parents as a Catholic." In midlife this woman decided that she was an alien in the French Catholic culture, and that she must have been "abandoned at birth by Jewish parents hiding somewhere in Paris and placed by them in the churchyard so that she would not be thought Jewish or raised as a Jew." Unconvinced, Roth proposes that the Frenchwoman's "sense of apartness" is probably a consequence of "having been orphaned and raised by people other than her natural parents," and that "Jewish parentage for this woman" is "the *least* likely possibility." Appelfeld replies, "But a possibility no less."

"Operation Shylock" is a work of fiction, but when I met with Appelfeld in Jerusalem, a few months ago, he told me the same story about his encounter with a woman adopted by non-Jews, who later decided she was a Jew "lost in the Holocaust." In our conversation, however, he reached a judgment similar to Roth's in the novel. "There was no evidence, only strong feeling," he said. "I understand why. You are just an unwanted child, and then here you are—a child with an interesting history."

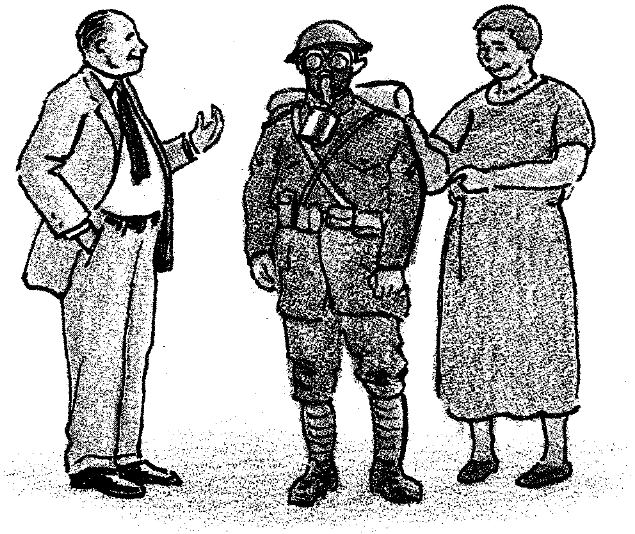
Like Norman Manea, Appelfeld was born in Romania and deported as a child to Trans-Dniestria. He was just eight and a half at the time, yet he managed to escape from a concentration camp and to sustain himself for three years as a vagabond and as an itinerant laborer on local farms, and he has said that because he remembers "almost nothing" accurately from his childhood he decided at the beginning of his writing life that he could best represent the world of his memory in fiction. After all, a novel can be truthful without being factual, and, as a novelist, Appelfeld was troubled by the notion that "Fragments," which he found unbelievable as nonfiction, might simply

OUTTAKES FROM THE ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW

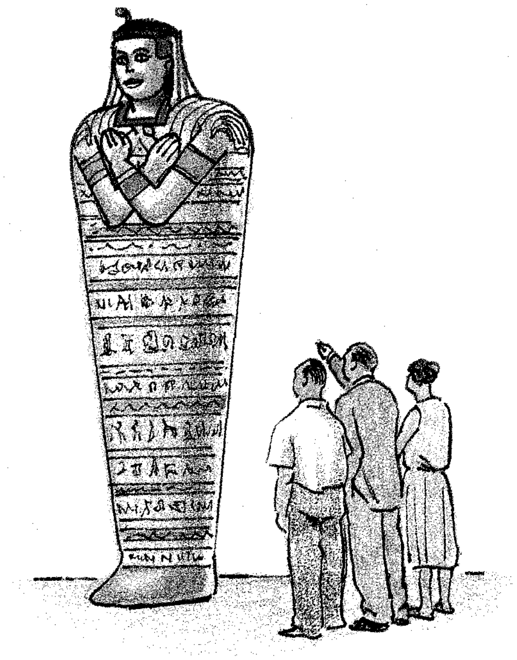
BY BRUCE McCALL



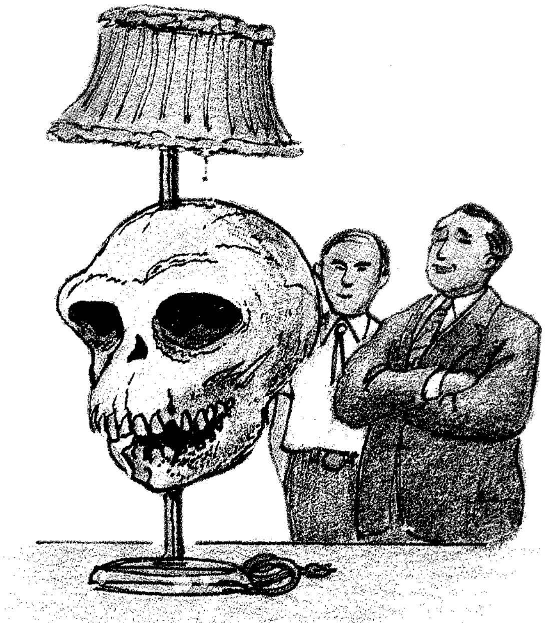
What you have here, Mabel, is a perpetual-motion machine, apparently in good working condition. But what's interesting is this ormolu trim. That probably makes it late Victorian—say, 1880 to 1890. Very rare. Unfortunately, with this chipping you wouldn't be able to get anything near top dollar. But you keep hitting those yard sales, now, Mabel!



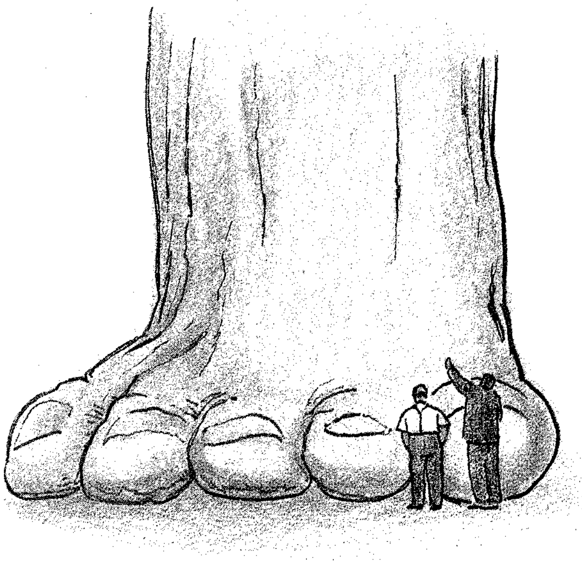
This is early nineteen-hundreds, probably from the Upper Ohio Valley, a little smaller than the ideal, but in really quite excellent condition. No moth damage. Now, that's unusual. And very complete. You just don't see many of these anymore, Mae, and certainly not in this kind of shape. Thanks so much. You take care, O.K.?



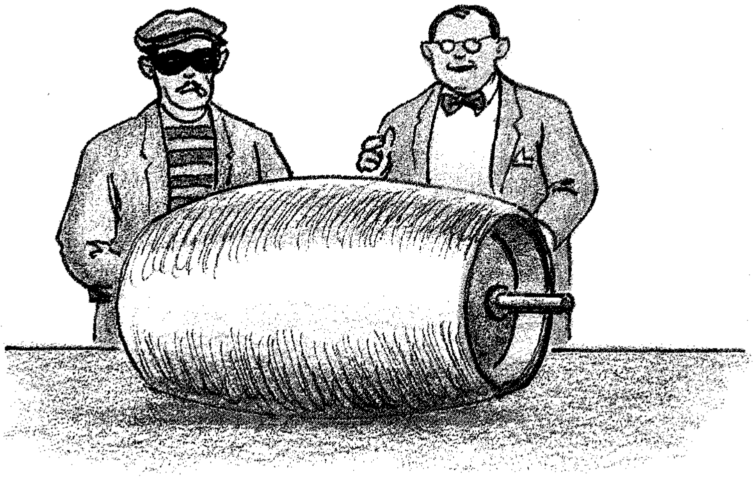
Well, Hank and Marie, this is the genuine article, all right. But we've seen an awful lot of these come on the market lately, many of them, frankly, in better condition. See that bubbling in the gold on the face? That's from humidity. So I'd say your late uncle's carelessness has come back to haunt you. Shrink-wrapping could probably have prevented it. But thanks for bringing it by!



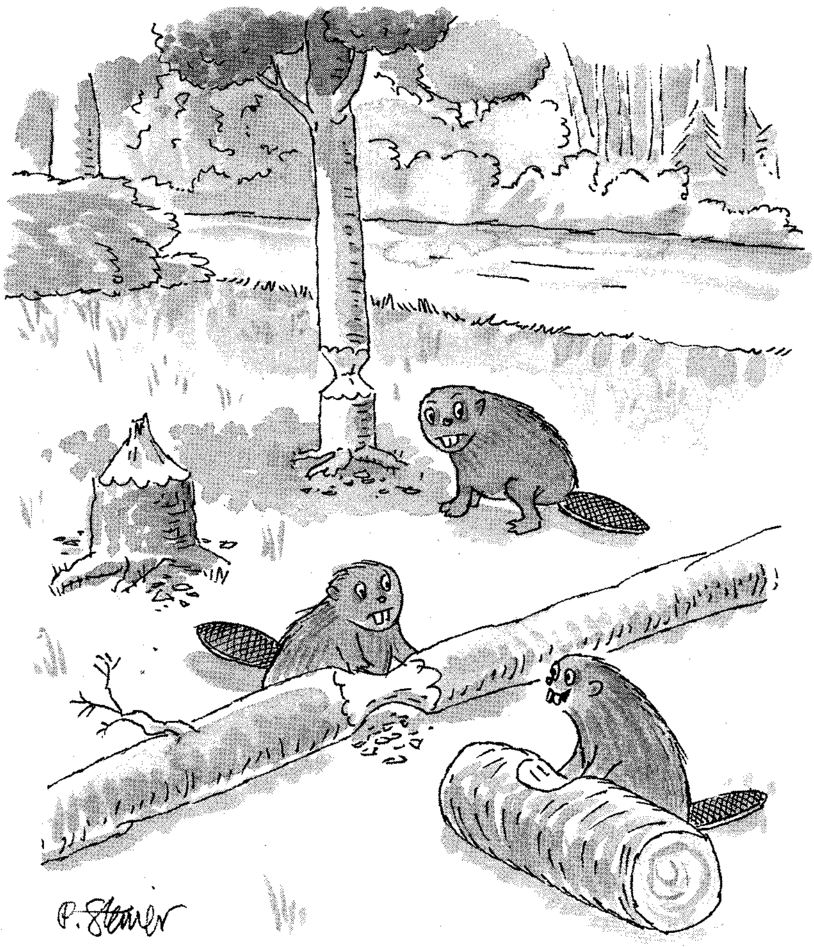
From what I know, Herb, the base of this lamp is a hominid, five to six million years old, and almost definitely the evolutionary "missing link" paleontologists have been looking for all over the world. So those two dollars got you a pretty interesting conversation piece as well as a handsome decorative light fixture. Enjoy.



The reason, Frank, that you can tell this isn't the real Colossus of Rhodes is in—see the sort of stippled, grayish effect? That tells you this is rock. The real Colossus was bronze. Sorry, Frank. Afraid you overpaid.



You know—is it Blackie?—you know, Blackie, that a spool of string like this ordinarily has no monetary value. But that's the ordinary spool. On the other hand, the spool of string Ben Franklin used in his kite experiments, the one that was stolen last week from the Smithsonian, that's valued at—would you believe—three million dollars!



"Wow! Whose idea was the cheese log?"

be relabelled fiction. "In a memoir, you just write what you write because it happened, which is not up to you. But fiction must have reason," he said, adding, "I do not like to speak about the Holocaust in terms of mystery. There were victims and there were killers. So there is no mystery, and to call it a mystery is to take it out of the moral context into a mystical, religious context."

Listening to Appelfeld, I wondered what Yaakov Maroko might have to say about mystification and the memory of the Holocaust, but when I phoned his home I was informed that he had died last year. I spoke to his widow in my halting Hebrew, and she graciously waited while I figured out how to say, "I hear that your husband thought that Wilkomirski was his son."

"Why do you say 'thought'?" she asked.

"The blood test," I said, and she said, "Who can know?"

I asked if she was aware that it was now said that Wilkomirski was not in the Holocaust; that he was a goy.

"You know what matzah is?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "The bread of affliction."

"Do you know," she said, "that in many countries there were people who said that Jews took the blood of goyim to make their matzah?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what the Holocaust is? Do you know there are many people who will say that the Holocaust did not happen?"

"Yes."

"Do you know Binjamin wrote a very good book about the Holocaust? So there are people who will be against him. There are always people who say what is not true about Jews."

I said, "Is Wilkomirski a son to you?"

"I am not his mother. I was a good wife to my husband, and his son was like a son to me," she said. "Have you read his book? I don't think anybody who didn't live those events could write this book." She went on to say, "We had very warm feelings. He came to us in Israel, we went to him in Switzerland. He always rang to say, 'Good Shabbat.' "

Mrs. Maroko said that Wilkomirski called her husband *Tate*—"Father," in Yiddish. "I liked this man," she said. "I can't ever say one hundred per cent that he's my husband's son. But I do not see this man as a liar."

Wilkomirski told me that he never believed that Maroko was his father, and he implied that he had taken the blood test only to prove the point. "But that was, at the end, not the main question," Wilkomirski said. "Already at an early stage he said to me, 'You are looking for your family, you can't find anything, I have lost my first son, who had the same name you have, and I have still the never used love of a father for a son'—and he would like to offer me that love of a father to a son. That was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life."

Maroko was a man of deep religious belief, so his indifference to the DNA test was an expression of that faith. But Wilkomirski had spoken of himself as a "scientific" historian, and he had willingly participated in what he understood to be a deception; in exchange for a Jewish father, he had pretended that one less Jewish child was killed in the Holocaust. The director of "Wanda's Lists," Vered Berman, felt that she had been used by Wilkomirski. "What was he doing with us?" she said. "He was building his identity."

Elitsur Bernstein, who had been among the throng of well-wishers surrounding Maroko at the airport to receive his Binjamin, intimated that he had never taken the adventure too seriously. "Look," he said, during our discussion of Wilkomirski, "legally he is not a Jew." By way of an example, Bernstein explained that Wilkomirski would have to convert if he wanted to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. I asked why he should have to convert if he was born a Jew. "*If*," Bernstein said. "But you have to prove that he was born Jewish. That is the whole problem."

Wilkomirski had been willing to undergo a DNA test to prove that he wasn't the son of Yaakov Maroko. So why not take a test to prove that he had no blood connection to Yvonne Berthe Grosjean. (Grosjean is survived by a brother, whose genetic material would settle the matter.) Leah Balint told me that she had no doubt that a DNA test would clear his name. Wilkomirski's literary agent, Eva Koralnik, of the Liepman agency, in Zurich, was weary of defending "Fragments" as "his truth," and told me she had pleaded with him to take the test. Even Bernstein told me, "Somewhere in a hidden corner there is a little wish, my wish, for him to do that." He hastened to add, "It wouldn't change anything in our friendship." Why should it, I wondered, unless the test proved him to be Grosjean? But Bernstein seemed to presume it would. "I am not a friend of Binjamin Wilkomirski, I am a friend of Bruno Dössekker," he said.

So far, Wilkomirski has refused to submit his DNA to renewed scrutiny. "What would it prove?" he asked me. "People would say, 'He was mixed up in this orphanage,' and all the bad speculations will go on." And he said, "I follow the rules of my life, and I'm not the property of comedians."

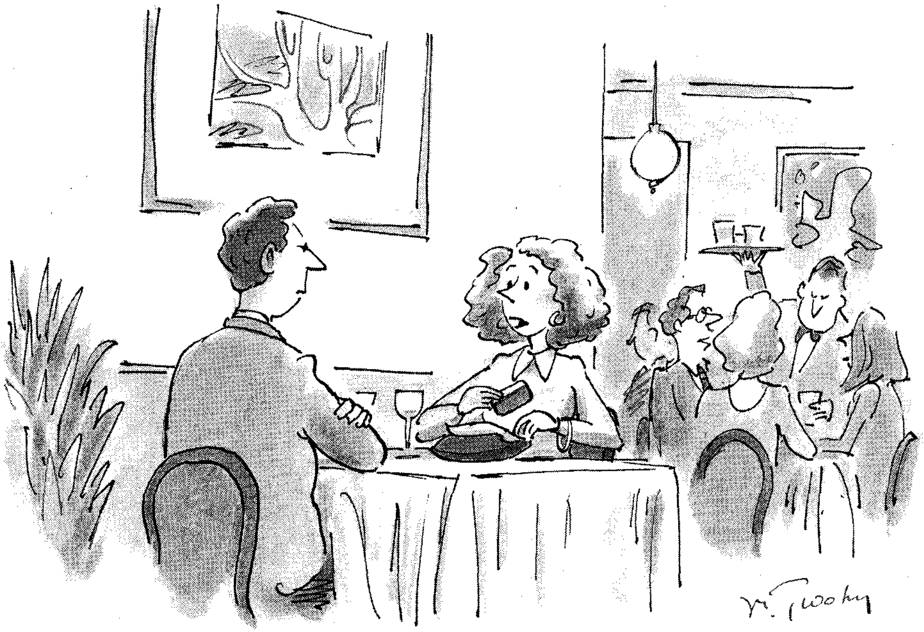
BECAUSE Daniel Ganzfried's Holocaust novel, "The Dispatcher," did not enjoy anything like the success of "Fragments," it is often suggested that he was motivated by rivalry to write his exposé. "Ganzfried, jealous guy, self-hating Jew, Oedipal guy who wants to kill Wilkomirski as a father figure," as he summed up the charges when we met in Zurich. But Ganzfried, who is a devotee of Bob Dylan, and has something of Dylan's wiry build and a face anchored by wide, inquisitive eyes, says that his experience as a writer is relevant to the Wilkomirski case only insofar as it taught him "how, with enough research, you can invent any Holocaust identity as true for a novel."

Wilkomirski had never made sense to Ganzfried as a Jew or as a Holocaust survivor; he did make sense to him as a Swiss bourgeois adoptee. "Here's a complex person with a complex background, and he looks for explanations, and the Holocaust can explain everything," Ganzfried said. "It explains why your girlfriend left you, why you have headaches, why you have school problems. The Holocaust is the key to the universe." Ganzfried made much of the fact that from the moment Wilkomirski entered the Dössekkers' home he had been a pampered child of privilege. "The issue is a senseless life," Ganzfried said, adding, "He doesn't need to make a living. The issue is boredom. There is this void, and then you fill it—with the Holocaust." (In the English translation, Wilkomirski's past is even more Holocaust-filled. As Elena Lappin notes in an exhaustive review of the Wilkomirski case in *Granta*, Carol Janeway's English version of "Fragments" amplifies the author's suffering by taking striking liberties with the original text; for instance, when Swiss children taunt the young Wilkomirski as a "beggar kid," Janeway makes them also call him a "yid," although the author never so much as hints that he was perceived as a Jew during his Swiss childhood.)

Ganzfried himself was born in Israel, in 1958; his father was a bus driver, his mother a Swiss Zionist. They lived on a kibbutz. His father rousted about, his mother suffered, and, at the age of one, Ganzfried was brought to Switzerland and reared by his grandmother. As a kid growing up without his parents close by, he said, "I made up stories, too. In 1967, I said that my father was an important tank commander defending the Sinai."

In a recent E-mail, he listed three things that most offended him about Wilkomirski's book and his persona as a survivor: "1. The child victim, remaining both, child and victim, for the rest of his life. 2. The never ending Holocaust, once in Auschwitz, you stay in there, forever, no matter what you do and what happens to you, which of course means the victim as sick person for the rest of his life, prey for analysts and therapists. 3. The pornography of violence in re: the Holocaust." Other than that, Ganzfried said, "All the people with whom I spoke—close and not close, recent connection to him and from far back in life—say he lied always and every day. He lied for obvious reasons and for no reasons. He lied cleverly and he lied stupidly. He goes to a hairdresser to get his hair curled. He has a phony Yiddish accent."

Ganzfried told me he has received numerous calls and letters telling him to consider himself responsible if Wilkomirski commits suicide. I also heard much talk of suicide from those friends and admirers who had encouraged Wilkomirski on his Holocaust pilgrimage, and regarded his every expression of anguish and trauma as evidence of his authenticity. So I was alarmed when I recently received a message from a psychologist in Berkeley named Harvey Peskin, one of Wilkomirski's most vocal supporters. (Peskin was instrumental in arranging for the American Orthopsychiatry Association to give Wilkomirski an award this spring for his work on Holocaust memory—the only public honor the author has received since Ganzfried unmasked him.) In his correspondence, Peskin compared the author of "Fragments" to the great survivor writers Jean Améry, Paul Celan, and Primo Levi. Peskin stressed that these men all



"Darling, you never let me see the side of you that pays."

committed suicide, and, remarking on Wilkomirski's psychic fragility, he wrote, "As with Levi, Celan, and Améry, his writing is no great safeguard." I realized that Ganzfried may not have been overstating the case when he told me, "These people talking about suicide will *suggest* it to him in some way. They'll say things like 'Did you ever see a train and think of yourself under it?' Some of his supporters would love him dead because then it looks like proof that he's Wilkomirski and the case is open forever." And, he said, "leaving the case open means you can invent the Holocaust as well as deny it."

One afternoon, when Ganzfried and I had been talking about the strangeness of the Wilkomirski case, he suddenly said something quite strange himself: "I think he likes me."

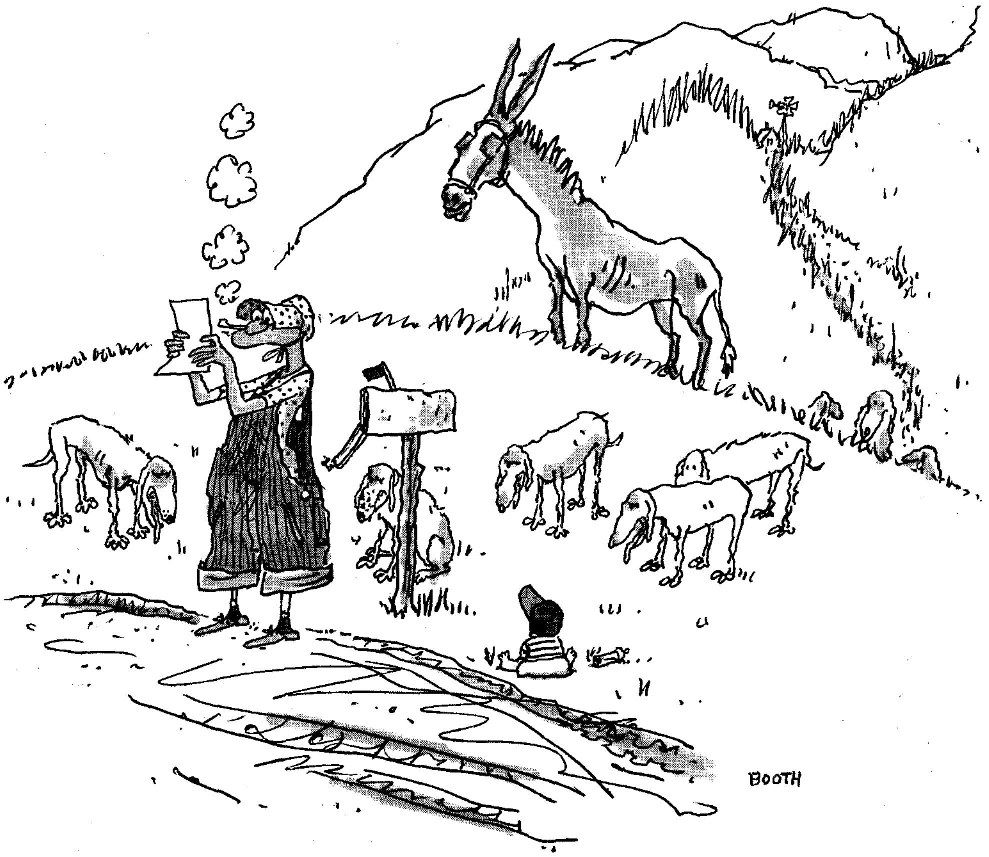
I wondered if Ganzfried had gone mad. But no, he said. "He's again the victim, the one he always wants to be. So I think he kind of likes me. And I kind of like him. I was the first real person to challenge him. He sees that I'm serious. Elitsur Bernstein didn't challenge him. Leah Balint didn't challenge him. So I am what he was waiting for. And I think he must wonder why it took so long." Ganzfried went on, "He's the proof we needed about how the Holocaust is not being dealt with seriously these days, so I kind of like him for that." And he said, "Try to mislead so many people at the same time—that takes talent, and I like him for this."

IN an essay on memory in "The Oxford Companion to the Mind," the psychologist Alan Baddeley writes, "Suppose I ask you to remember the word 'jam.' I can bias the way in which you encode and remember the word by preceding it with the word 'traffic' or with 'strawberry.' If I have initially biased your interpretation of the word in the direction of traffic jam, you are much less likely to recognize the word subsequently if it is accompanied by the word 'raspberry,' which biases you toward the other meaning of jam. This effect occurs even though the subject knows full well that he is only supposed to remember the word 'jam' and not the contextual or biasing words. . . . We do not perceive or remember in a vacuum."

Reading this with Wilkomirski in mind, I had a sense of recognition. In high school, and later, when he told people that he was a victim of the Holocaust, he was met with disbelief. Then, beginning with Bernstein and Piller, he found listeners to whom he needed merely to drop hints—clenching up while watching the Majdanek trial on TV, or describing the dream of barracks, shooting, and fire—for them to return with the suggestion that he was holding something back that he needed to work out. In the intervening years, of course, the image of Holocaust survival had been transformed in the public imagination from something of a shameful taboo to a hallowed icon; remembrance of the Holocaust, which was until recently held to be the special burden and sacred duty of Jews, has evolved into a common civic rite in much of Western culture, and, instead of persuading others of his memories, Wilkomirski was now allowing himself to be persuaded by others. So, when he said "nightmare," and the suggestion came back "Holocaust," he could both resist and creep up on the possibility, in a hypnotic, semiconscious manner, which not only seemed like memory but felt like it, too.

Wilkomirski described the mechanics of this process clearly when I asked him why he did not name Auschwitz in his book but now declares that he is an Auschwitz survivor. "Look," he said. "Can't you imagine that you are afraid of your own memories, and you don't dare to think of certain things? When somebody asked me, 'Bruno, have you been in Auschwitz?' I said, 'No, no, I have nothing to do with that,' and I got so terribly frightened. It was too much to hear that. I didn't want to make the connection. But by the time I started my historical research I slowly got used to the idea that a part of my memory is in a part of Auschwitz."

This is the language of testament more than of testimony. Just as a novice in an ecclesiastical order surrenders to a deity, so Wilkomirski, armed with the suggestions of his "research," was able slowly to divine that his memory—and, by extension, that he himself—belonged to the Holocaust, and ultimately to Auschwitz. But what is most peculiar about his case is that he was simultaneously followed and led in



"In reply to your inquiry regarding the Burke garden hoe, please visit our Worldwide Web home page at http://www.burke1903.com."

his victim's progress by a pharaoh's army of disciples who swore by his witness.

The jacket copy of the American edition of Wilkomirski's memoir calls it "a book that is not read but experienced." But how *is* one to experience a book, if not by reading it—except as a blunt object? Apparently, that is what is being ordained: an abdication of sense in favor of sensation. In a time when the invocation of the intolerable offense of genocide has become a staple of sermons on tolerance, and one has only to say the word "Holocaust" to set off a shudder of sympathetic moral righteousness, Wilkomirski's fact-free fable of an irremediably and unforgettably victimized childhood is the ultimate rhetorical blunt object. It hardly seemed to matter that the solipsism of his memory allowed for no new understanding of the crimes he suffered. On the contrary, in the eyes of its admirers the supremacy of one individual's woe seemed to be what gave "Fragments" its authority.

Toward the end of the time I spent with Wilkomirski, I asked, "Do you understand that people are particularly touchy about your truthfulness because you're laying claim to the Holocaust? Does that make sense to you?" He said, "I don't know," and after a moment he added, "Who can judge what was possible at the time? Nobody. Because it's more than you can imagine." This was his alibi; and in taking the idea of possibility to an insupportable extreme, Wilkomirski was effectively seeking to transform the fact of the Nazi extermination campaign into a question of belief. "The Holocaust exists because I remember it," he seemed to be saying, "so to doubt me is to doubt the Holocaust."

Reading the critical hosannas that greeted "Fragments" and that have hung around to mock Wilkomirski in his fall from grace, I was reminded of how Elie Wiesel was hoodwinked, in 1965, into glorifying Jerzy Kosinski's "The Painted Bird," another graphically violent and often surreal book about a Jewish wartime boyhood in Poland. Of course, "The Painted Bird" was published as a novel, and the fantastic adventures of the boy in his book had little more than a geographic connection with Kosinski's own fairly comfortable wartime experience as the son of a Jewish family disguised as Gentiles in a Polish village. But Kosinski was a man who constantly mystified his own biography, then scrambled, with astonishing skill, to navigate the identity mazes he had constructed. When Kosinski heard that Wiesel would be reviewing his novel for the *Times Book Review* he found an opportunity to tell him that the story was autobiographical. According to Kosinski's biographer, James Park Sloan, Wiesel had originally had a "lukewarm" reaction to "The Painted Bird," but, following Kosinski's suggestion, he "sanctified the book"—the review ran under the headline "Everybody's Victim"—as if it were a work of direct witness.

Handelsman

"I think I've acquired some wisdom over the years, but there doesn't seem to be much demand for it."

• •

So a credulous critic can turn strawberry jam into a traffic jam. Yet if one bothers to read, rather than to "experience," Wilkomirski's book, it is difficult to understand how it was ever taken seriously. Much of "Fragments" is devoted to chronicling Wilkomirski's own helpless puniness, yet the narrative is driven largely by moments in which he exhibits uncanny physical strength, both in withstanding violence and in dealing it out: he is lashed across the face with a whip, punted into the air by a jackboot to the back of the head, swung by his feet over the head of a guard, who smashes him forehead first into a stone wall; and he perseveres, bloodied but still bold enough that when he sees a little boy's head smashed in by another guard's fist he charges the murderer and, imagining himself to be a wolf, leaps at the man, grabs hold of his forearm, sinks his teeth into it, and refuses to let go even as he is carried off, dripping "blood and spit," until "memory stops at the moment when my back is slammed hard against something."

Wilkomirski is a sort of feral-child superhero. In his febrile account of his journey out of Majdanek, a wickedly overpacked train crashes, tips over, and catches fire, and he finds himself to be a nearly solitary survivor in a carload of dead. Then he notices that all the bodies pressing down on him have suddenly and inexplicably become naked. Here is how he escapes:

> With a wild fury that I've never felt in myself before, I begin to struggle and kick, to make a space for myself, and then I draw breath, deeper than I've ever drawn breath before, and I begin to scream with all my strength as I've never screamed before.
>
> At this very moment, like an answer to my great long scream, something behind me moves. Two big, strong hands seize me under the arms. They throw me forward, up over everyone else, to where the light is, and air. I fly out over the motionless bodies, fall to earth somewhere.

This is almost too silly to be called kitsch. And yet here, in the Washington *Times*, is the writer Arnost Lustig, himself a camp survivor, comparing "Fragments" to the works of Homer, Cervantes, and Shakespeare; and here, in the *Guardian*, is Anne Karpf, a daughter of survivors, proclaiming that Wilkomirski, having written "one of the great works about the Holocaust . . . ranks with Primo Levi."

But Levi is in every way Wilkomirski's opposite. He is a great memoirist in large measure because he never draws attention to himself; he detests his victimization; he knows irony. He finds people around him to admire, and writes of them with almost voracious fascination, generosity, and insight. He does not seek pity, although his every sentence calls up our sympathy. The lessons he draws are profound, because they are defiantly basic.

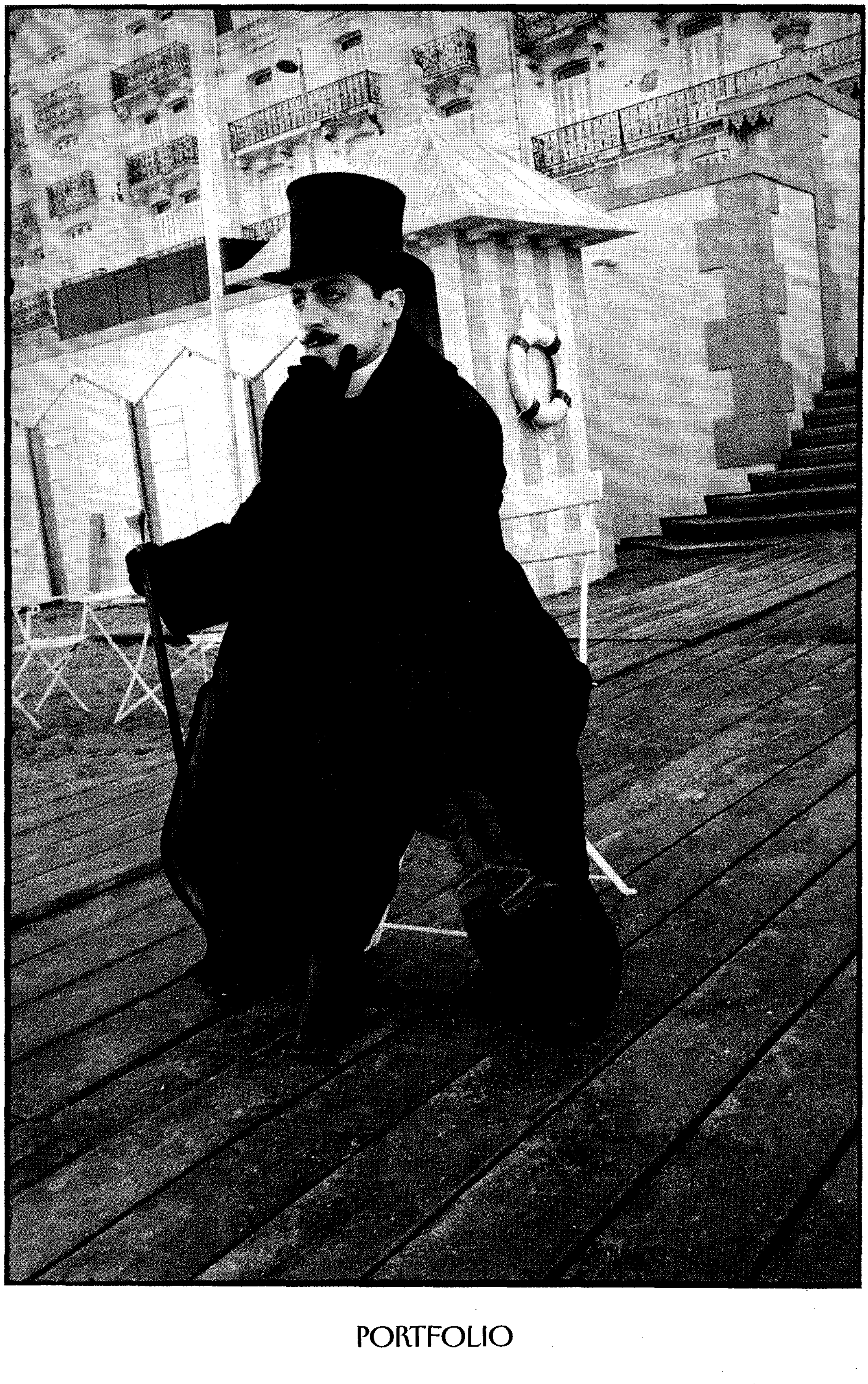
Shortly before his death, twelve years ago, Levi expressed his dismay at "the gap that exists and grows wider every year between things as they were 'down there' and things as they are represented by the current imagination fed by approximative books, films, and myths." The misrepresentations that Levi laments certainly are not designed to mislead; they invariably come packaged as talismans of memory, and stamped with warnings against the perils of forgetting. And Levi surely knew that one cannot remember what one has never experienced. At best, we can reclaim only the memories of others—and at worst, too. That's what Wilkomirski has done, decking himself out in second-hand memories, borrowed memories, and outright stolen memories. I am thinking of a testimony he gave to the Holocaust museum, where he held up a picture of a little blond-haired, Jewish boy in a Kraków orphanage after the war, and said, "I know that's me." Who was that child before Wilkomirski clipped his little head and put it on his own shoulders?

BOOKS of "personal narrative" fill more than ten yards of shelf space in the shop at the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., but when I went there last December Wilkomirski's "Fragments" was not among them. The cashier first expressed surprise, but after a moment he said softly, "You know there are suspicions?" I said I was aware. "Well," he said. "All right, then," and he returned to his register. The museum's publicist, Shana Penn, explained that a decision had been made not to reorder the book "until the matter is cleared up." As far as I could determine, this public act of repudiation made the museum unique among the cultural institutions that face embarrassment for having vested Wilkomirski with laurels—and even, in the museum's case, profited through fund-raising from his showmanship. The museum, however, had shied away from suggestions that it organize an investigation of Wilkomirski. That responsibility was finally left to his literary agent, Eva Koralnik, and she signed a contract with the historian Stefan Mächler this spring.

Mächler's task is to conduct a thoroughgoing and impartial assessment of the case, and to produce a report in the coming months that, whatever its conclusions, will be made available to all the publishers of "Fragments" so that they may include it in future editions of the book. Wilkomirski has said he will coöperate fully, but, whatever Mächler writes, it may prove impossible to dispel the fog of confusion that clings to Wilkomirski's feckless literary adventure.

A few days after my visit to the Holocaust museum, I saw Norman Manea in New York. He had just finished teaching "Fragments" in a course on the literature of the Holocaust at Bard College, and he had hoped that it might spark a discussion of how a memoir's factuality affects its truthfulness. But, he told me mournfully, "My students said if the book is good it doesn't matter." Manea has brooded for decades and written with insight on aspects of the politics of language which also vexed George Orwell: every time we fail to use words with care for their truthfulness, the honesty of everything we use words to express becomes progressively forsaken. "We have now this model of suffering called Holocaust," Manea told me. "So a wife can cry and say, 'You made my life a Holocaust.' And not long ago I saw that a porno channel here in New York was taken off the air for a month, and the woman said, 'We were put through a Holocaust.' So can you prevent this? No, especially in this time in which we live, when the border between reality and fiction is so vague. It's a huge event, the Holocaust, so trivialization, commercialization, false memory, and impostors are inevitably going to arise. But one must impose standards."

The one thing that Wilkomirski said repeatedly which I believe unequivocally is that he wrote his memories for himself, and he doesn't ultimately care what anybody else says, because nobody can take those memories away from him. But after more than six months of studying the mischief that has followed from Wilkomirski's fantasies and obfuscation, I am more fearful for and depressed by the culture that received him as an apostle of memory than I am for the man himself, whoever he thinks he is. Several times, during our conversations, he told me that he was sure the papers in his official dossier represented a real boy called Bruno Grosjean, and so I asked him what might have become of that Bruno. Wilkomirski wasn't sure, but suddenly he said that long ago, in his childhood, he had met this missing boy. In the beginning, he sounded uncertain about this, his voice slow and faltering, as if he were encountering a new memory unexpectedly. Then he grew excited, and everything became clear: he first encountered the Grosjean boy in the Swiss orphanage where, Wilkomirski believed, they were switched, and he said they met again much later, when they were both in high school. At first, they avoided each other, and then they began to talk. Wilkomirski said, "He started to tell me how wonderful he has it with his foster parents, that he's so lucky, and that they wanted to emigrate." The words rushed out of him now, chunks of dialogue coming back intact. His eyes were aimed off somewhere. He was inside the memory. I interrupted him there to ask whether his lost doppelgänger was still called Bruno. "Yes, but, the boy had a new name, too—Hugo, or Wolf, or something like that," Wilkomirski said, and he told me that he thinks the missing Grosjean may be living in America. ♦

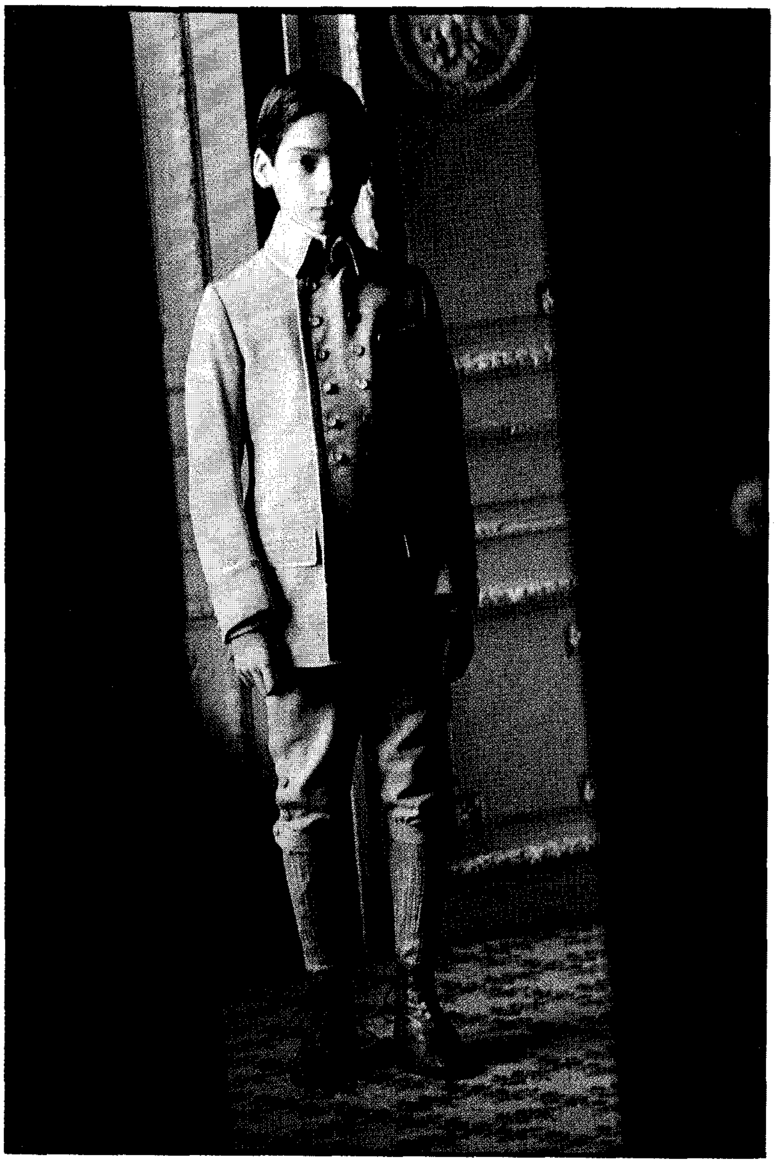


PORTFOLIO

PROUST AT THE MOVIES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANÇOIS-MARIE BANIER

The French were a while coming to Proust. As late as the nineteen-fifties, when most Americans already took it for granted that he was among the greatest of modern writers, a lot of people in France saw him as a slightly secondary figure—the way we might have seen a long-winded Scott Fitzgerald, or a Truman Capote who actually got his book written. In the past twenty-five years, though, all that has changed, and Proust has taken his deserved place among the French as at once the most magnanimous and the most exquisite of their novelists. And so the release of the first successful movie translation of Proust's "À la Recherche du Temps Perdu" has made for an event in Paris. There is almost universal agreement that Raul Ruiz's adaptation of "Le Temps Retrouvé," Proust's last volume, ought to have won the Palme d'Or at Cannes. The film—whose title in English will be "Time Regained"—was released in France three days after its début in Cannes, and has found an audience that at one cinema in Paris stretches out along the Boulevard Saint-Germain near the Odéon every night.



Previous movie attempts (by Harold Pinter, Joseph Losey, Luchino Visconti, and Volker Schlöndorff, most notably) to invade the Proust territory had foundered on the beaches of "Swann in Love." Ruiz, a Chilean director of select reputation, who had made more than fifty little-seen films, had the crazy-smart idea of adapting, instead, the unpromising valedictory last volume, in which the war comes, and everyone dies, suffers, or is shown to have been living a life of pitiful illusion. In principle, this should have been like trying to mount a production of "Hamlet" in which the entire story is set off by the exchange of poisoned foils. But, since Proust's purpose was to make every poisoned foil tossed between his characters imply the whole plot, this finale-first approach works.

Ruiz has suddenly become a personage in Paris. He has even been paid the compliment of being asked to fill out the "Proust questionnaire," a who-are-you? parlor game that the real Marcel played as a young man. (Ruiz announced to his new public that his favorite characters in literature are "Don Quichotte, Jean Valjean, and Jude l'Obscur," and that his current state of mind is "tired and depressed, in the best sense of the term.")

Although in Paris the success of the film has generally been held to be the consequence of its jump-cutting, surrealist mise en scène, its visual style can sometimes seem more Cocteau than Proust, and its real triumph may lie in the roster of performances that Ruiz has coaxed out of his actors, particularly the women: Marie-France Pisier as a comically hysterical and beautifully aged Madame Verdurin; Catherine Deneuve, seemingly miscast as Odette, yet rightly, deeply cold; and, best of all, the unbelievably beautiful Emmanuelle Béart as the seductive, heartbreaking, and broken-hearted Gilberte. No curtain of late-modern irony (or, truth be told, emancipation) seems to separate these actresses from the lives of the women of the last fin de siècle whom they impersonate. Among the men, John Malkovich creates a furious, dagger-sharp Baron de Charlus, the aesthetic dictator, and Pascal Greggory is a tortured and noble Saint-Loup. The matchlessly high-hearted and funny and tender narrator himself is impersonated by the Italian actor Marcello Mazzarella, a scarily perfect look-alike. The playing of the company brings forward the delicious social comedy of the book—the Molière in Proust—in a bracing clear air of real places and faces. The camera, someone once said, always falsifies the present since it forgets the remembering present. The gift on the other side of that curse is that in the eternal present of movies, with the remembering present gone, the past just lives. —Adam Gopnik

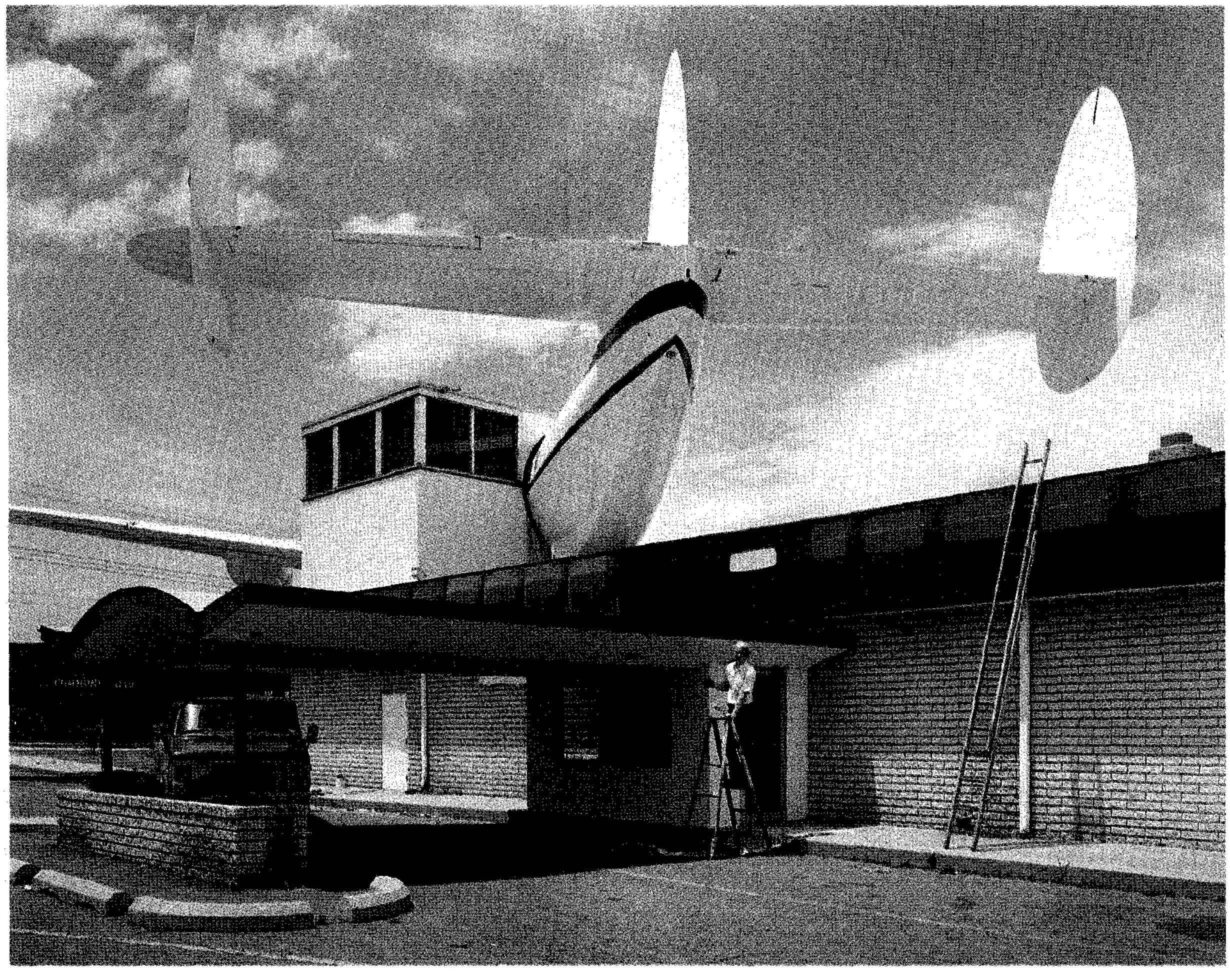
Previous page: Marcello Mazzarella is the narrator in Raul Ruiz's movie of "Le Temps Retrouvé."
Above: Georges du Fresne plays the young Marcel. Opposite: Catherine Deneuve is Odette de Crécy.

FICTION

FLIGHT

The glamour of modern travel.

BY J. ROBERT LENNON



I WAS heading east through central Washington in my rented car, hours behind me and hours ahead. The land was flat and brown all around and the trees very small, set far apart from one another a great distance from the highway, the sky clear and dark blue, wallpapered with tiny weird clouds. I was so intent on the incessant approach of road that the stationary world seemed to race away when I looked at it, and I felt as if I were falling helplessly through space.

At an exit I stopped for gas and bought a frozen something-or-other, which I heated in the microwave in the gas station and ate standing while I looked at boxes of rental videos. Back on the road, I drove until night fell. When I got tired I pulled over at a rest stop and dozed next to an idling tractor-trailer. For what it was worth, I was more than halfway home.

A telephone woke me. When I opened my eyes I was surprised to find myself in a car. It was a cellular phone, bolted to the hump between the seats. I hadn't asked for it at the rental office, but they had provided it gratis, as if it would be of some use. Outside, the rest-stop parking lot was illuminated by street lights around which no insects swarmed. Beyond the light, there was only blackness. The glowing digits on the dash read 1:25.

The phone kept ringing. I picked up the receiver and pressed a button marked "Start."

"Hello?"

For a moment I heard only shallow breaths.

"Hello?"

"It's me," came a woman's voice.

"DON'T hang up," she said. The voice was hoarse and slow, a nighttime voice, the sort heard when everyone else has left the party and the floor is littered with half-empty plastic cups of beer. "O.K., good," she said. "Don't. Hang. Up. Please."

"O.K."

"I don't know why I'm calling. I know it's late." She let out a long, acid sigh that ended with a hitch, and I thought she'd cry, but the moment passed. "First of all, I want to say, I want to apologize, and please don't say anything, please. I would like to finish before you say anything or hang up on me. First of all, I am very, very sorry, and I know that may not mean anything to you right now, and I understand that, but I am sorry. I just got home and all I could think about on the drive back was what a terrible mistake I made and that I would do anything, anything in the world to be able to take it back. O.K. Just let me finish. Second of all, I just want to say that I know you won't take me back and I don't expect you to just because of this phone call, but if it's any consolation to you for what happened I am never going to forget this and I will probably go to my grave thinking that it was the worst mistake I ever made. I mean, and I can barely imagine this, I guess there will be other guys someday"—she was sniffling now—"but even so I think that no matter what happiness comes to me I will always remember this unhappiness and think how much better my life would have been if I had thought . . . I mean, if I had thought for even a second, but there's no point in saying that now. And the third thing, I guess there is no third thing, except just that I love you and I know that means nothing to you now, or maybe just makes you angry thinking it's a lie or maybe even if it isn't a lie it just doesn't matter to you anymore, because you can't love a person you cannot trust. I shouldn't sit here and tell you—but I will, I'll tell you because I have to say it—you can trust me. If you took me back, which I know is out of the question, you would never hear a lie out of my mouth again." A pause. "So I'm sorry," and her voice broke on "sorry," before she lost it to sobs.

I was still not awake enough to realize that I'd been asleep for some time, and my mind tried to peek around this monologue and find the missing hours. I was awake enough to know that this voice on the phone belonged to no one I'd ever spoken to.

THE day before had been my thirty-sixth birthday. I was supposed to fly from Newark to Minneapolis, then connect to Marshall, Montana, where I lived alone in a two-room apartment in a crumbling part of town known as West Hill. I had been in Newark to attend my mother's deathbed, which failed to work out: by the time I arrived, less than twenty-four hours after she had called to tell me she was dying, she had already arranged for a car to take her home from the hospital.

Choppy air roiled over the East Coast, and some kind of accident in Denver had delayed flights across the country, so my plane idled for hours on the runway, stuck in traffic. To save myself the trouble of carry-on luggage, I'd foolishly packed the books I'd brought in my duffelbag, which was checked through to Montana; now I had nothing to read. I listened to my fellow-passengers trying to cobble together a narrative from the fragments of a crash rumor they'd overheard back in the terminal.

"It was a mail plane. The crew escaped, but all the packages were burned up. Guarantee my J. Crew stuff was in there."

"I think it was a military transport. Some general or somebody got killed."

"They saw it go down in the mountains but they can't get to it."

"It was a private jet. I hope it was Bill Gates's."

I checked and double-checked my arrival and departure times in Minneapolis and the gate map in my on-flight magazine, trying to calculate the latest the plane could take off and still allow me to make my connection. I saw myself sprinting down a crowded concourse, unencumbered by luggage, toward a far-flung terminal.

"There's a massage station back in Terminal B," someone was saying. "For fifteen bucks you can get a half-hour backrub. I ought to have done it."

"In front of all Newark!"

"I'm not ashamed."

We took off with apologies from the pilot at about the time we were supposed to have begun our descent into Minneapolis-St. Paul. I fell asleep, ate dinner, fell asleep again, and disembarked in the muggy and lake-spangled Midwest.

"Flight 157 to Marshall?" I asked the ticket agent.

She laughed. "Long gone."

"Put me on a later flight?"

"No such thing. I can get you out at nine-fifteen tomorrow morning."

"Will you get me a hotel room and a ride to it?"

She reached under the counter and pulled out a coupon: ten per cent off at the Super 8. "We can give you a discount," she said. "No accommodations for weather delays, sorry."

I gave back the coupon. "I thought it was a crash. In Denver."

"That was O'Hare. And I wouldn't call it a crash."

I persisted. Could I get out of Minneapolis that night? I didn't know anyone in Minneapolis, and didn't want to sleep curled against the refrigerated terminal air on an ass-worn seat in the waiting area. She asked how about Seattle at 9 P.M., then Marshall at two-ten in the morning, and I said O.K.

I HAD time to kill. The airport had a little mall, and the shops had themes: winter, health, wholesomeness. But it was August, and weary, begrimed travellers from all quarters haunted the unswept concourses. At Prairie Lights Brewhouse I bought snob coffee and drank it over an abandoned *USA Today*. I read again and again, without comprehension, a graph charting the consumption of watermelon in America since 1954. I must have slept, because when I woke my flight was boarding.

Everyone on the plane to Seattle seemed to be drunk. They were possessed of an odd solidarity, as if they had all been friends for ages, though they lacked any common feature save their booze-fuelled ruddiness and good spirits. I asked the slumped, frayed-looking woman sitting next to me what was going on. Her face fell into a happy leer as she remembered. "You see that guy?" she said.

"Him?" I was pointing to a thickset man wearing a big hat and waiting in line for the first-class bathroom a dozen rows ahead.

"He is a topnotch oil-and-gas lawyer from Fort Worth, Texas, and he's been buying us all drinks for the last two and a half hours." Apparently they had all been booked on a flight scheduled to depart some time ago, but while taxiing their plane bumped a wing against a movable ladder left out on the tarmac. Maintenance crews had to examine and possibly repair the damage. "They put us all on this flight, but we had to wait. So this guy gets up and says the drinks are on him. I shared a pitcher of Margaritas with some high-school teacher." At that moment a bespectacled man wearing a loosened tie shambled by and pointed at the woman with both hands. The two burst into giggles and the man moved on. "Oh, my," she said.

"Did you hear about the crash in Denver?" I asked.

"That was in Omaha, I heard. You know, the plane was full of zoo animals from Africa, isn't that terrible? No more terrible than a zoo, though. I believe they are inhumane—the zoos, not the animals. The animals ought to be let go."

People were boarding the plane to cheers and applause, ducking in embarrassment or making jokes, exaggerating their drunkenness, staging pantomimed pratfalls. Nobody seemed to recognize specific seat assignments; they just stowed their carry-ons and stood around, as if at a cocktail party.

In time, we took off. The passengers became quiet, falling into boozy sleep. The new silence, backed by the ambient rumble of flight and murmured conversations, reminded me of my mother's hospital room, the sharp evening light softened by tan shades. She was telling two nurses a joke when I arrived. "So Moses says, 'I'll take a mulligan!' " They laughed together.

"Mom?" I said.

"Paulie!"

"How are you?"

The nurses bustled out past me, averting their eyes. "Actually, Paulie, I'm feeling much better."

She looked like a party clown on a three-day weekend, her skin sallow from long days under makeup, her eyes tired and shifting.

"I'll be out of here tomorrow," she said.

"That's great." I riffled through the list of comforting phrases I'd compiled in my head. Had I misunderstood? Come right away, Paulie, she'd said, and I'd maxed out my credit card buying the ticket.

"Have you gotten your birthday present?" she asked me.

"No."

"It's coming. You'll love it."

"Terrific," I said. "Thanks." I wanted to sit down, though not necessarily here. The only furniture in the room was her bed and a nightstand. "Maybe I'll go find a chair."

"Why don't you do that? Then we can talk."

All along the ward, I peered into rooms, looking for a free chair. There were a few, but the beds they stood by were occupied by the sick, languidly manipulating their television remote controls or fitfully dozing. At the end of the hall I turned a corner and found an empty room. I went in. There was a neatly dressed bed, half curtained and in shadow, and beyond it an unmade one under bright light. Two chairs were arranged at its foot. As I picked one up, preparing to carry it back, I noticed that the unmade bed was unmade because somebody was lying in it—a very old man, with skin the color of Elmer's glue. A discreet translucent tube was taped across his face, branching off into his nostrils, and he breathed in a regular rhythm so slow that I thought he must be in hibernation.

Except that his eyes were open. They were dark brown and brilliantly alive, like shiny coins half buried on a desolate beach. He lifted his head—barely—and moved his lips. Words escaped in a whisper. I couldn't understand them.

"I'm sorry?" I said, moving closer. "Sir?"

His hand had snaked out from under the sheet, and he beckoned to me. I went to his bedside. "I didn't mean to walk in like this," I said. "I thought the room was empty."

He shook his head, dismissing the apology. I brought my ear to his lips and smelled the bitter dryness of him, something like baking soda.

"Take it," he said.

"Sir?"

"Take the chair," he said. "Nobody's using it."

When I carried the chair back to my mother's room, I discovered her chart hanging on a little hook outside her door: "Hemorrhoidectomy," it said. Surgery performed by a Dr. Martinez, and a touch of codeine prescribed for the pain.

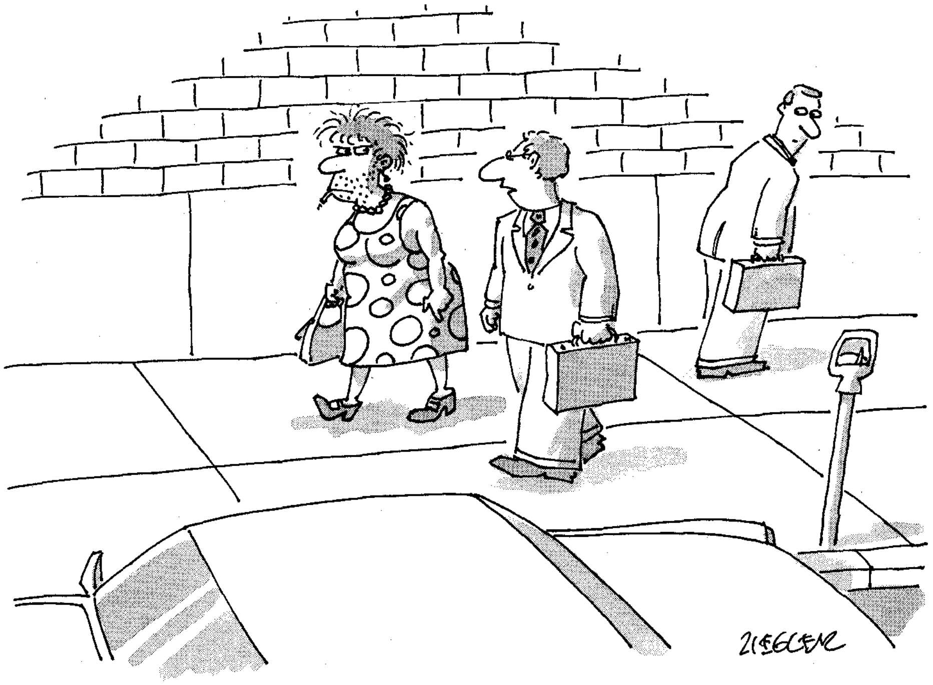
My flight to Marshall had been cancelled. In fact, there was even some doubt that it had ever existed. "I know we used to fly to Marshall at that time," the ticket agent told me. "But I don't think we have for quite a while." His appearance put me briefly at ease; he wore his hair short and unkempt, and he had a little black goatee: exactly the way young men in Seattle were supposed to look. I explained that I'd been booked on the flight; it had to exist. I gave him my name and he looked it up.

"You're booked to fly to Madison, Wisconsin," he said.

"*Marshall.* Marshall, *Montana.*"

He shook his head. "Look," he said. "I can let you use the phone." He reached beneath the counter and pulled out a receiver with a glowing keypad. "If you know anyone in town, have them come get you and bring you back in the morning. We'll get you out of here then."

"That's all you're giving me? A phone call?"



"Gee, Al, two thousand dollars doesn't buy much of a sex change these days, does it?"

He frowned. "Take it or leave it," he said.

Janine arrived in the same Ford Escort we'd shared when we lived together in Marshall. Idling, it made a new sound, as if a man were crouched under the hood sharpening a large knife. She leaned across the empty passenger seat and pushed open the door for me.

The back seat was full of cardboard boxes with what looked like all her winter clothes spilling out of them. She was wearing a Greek fisherman's cap and a couple of large crystal pendants around her neck. I knew the hat but not the pendants.

"I really appreciate it," I said. She eyed me with a kind of dispassionate destructiveness, as if I were a walnut she was about to crack open.

"There's a patch of cold floor with your name on it," she said.

"Well, thanks. It's a far cry from the airport."

We listened to the stereo without speaking for most of the ride back to her place. It was a mix tape of some kind, a compilation of songs that had been popular before we knew each other. "This is a good tape," I said.

"Somebody made it for me."

"I see."

She put out her cigarette. "So where were you flying back from?" she asked. A car moved into traffic behind us, illuminating the interior, and our eyes met, reflected in the windshield.

"Newark. My mother was in the hospital. She's better now." I considered telling her the whole story, but she interrupted to tell me that her sister, whom I'd totally forgotten had been sick with bone cancer for a long time, had finally died last month.

"Oh, my God," I said. "I'm so sorry."

She shrugged. "It was only a matter of time. There was a memorial service. Everybody read a little something they wrote. I know everybody says this, but she would have really loved it."

"It sounds like—"

"In fact, I suggested to her that we do something like it while she was still alive. It would be kind of a party, and her friends and all of us would be there, and we'd tell her how much we loved her and everything. But she would have none of it. She was too proud."

We were silent for a little while. She clenched and unclenched her hands on the wheel. I tried to imagine what this would be like, hearing everyone telling you they love you, knowing that they can say nothing else, because you're dying.

Janine lived in the basement of some rich people. They had fixed things up pretty nicely down there—a terrific kitchen with a tile floor, a fold-down Murphy bed, and some built-in bookshelves—but none of it could dispel the gloom. The air was clammy. Shrill sounds emanated from a clock radio sitting on an upturned milk crate. Janine threw her coat on the bed. "I'll get you a blanket," she said, heading for a closet.

"So what have you been doing?" I asked. "For a living."

"Computer shit. Editing," came her muffled voice. "I commute half an hour." She walked out into the room and threw two rough Army blankets and a stained pillow on the floor at my feet. "Don't you want to know what I've been doing with my free time?"

"If you want to talk about it, I—"

She waved a dismissive hand at me and walked off, down a little hallway. I saw a light go on and heard water running. I spread the blankets out in a neat rectangle, set the pillow at one end, took off my shoes, and got into bed. I rolled to one side and stared at the carpet. Squinting, I could make out a shiny black millipede. I reached for it, but it burrowed down into the weave.

Janine came out wearing a pair of pajamas I had given her for Christmas one year. "Don't get up," she said. She sat on the bed with her legs crossed and watched me. "How long has it been since we last spoke?"

"I'll bet it's six months," I said.

"More than two years. Do you know I've been married and divorced since we broke up?"

I didn't think she wanted me to answer, so I didn't.

"I married this guy practically on a whim, about five months after I moved here. He had a house in Queen Anne and bought and sold art for a living. He travelled a lot to Europe and didn't invite me along. I went to work, you know, and would come home to this enormous house with all this art on the walls. Then one time he brought this painter home from Poland, this gigantic kid who did these stupid splatter things, and the kid moved into one of the upstairs rooms and did his thing in there, and Ernest, that's my husband, sold his

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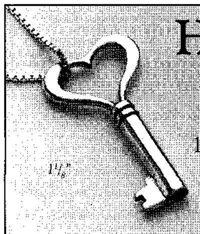

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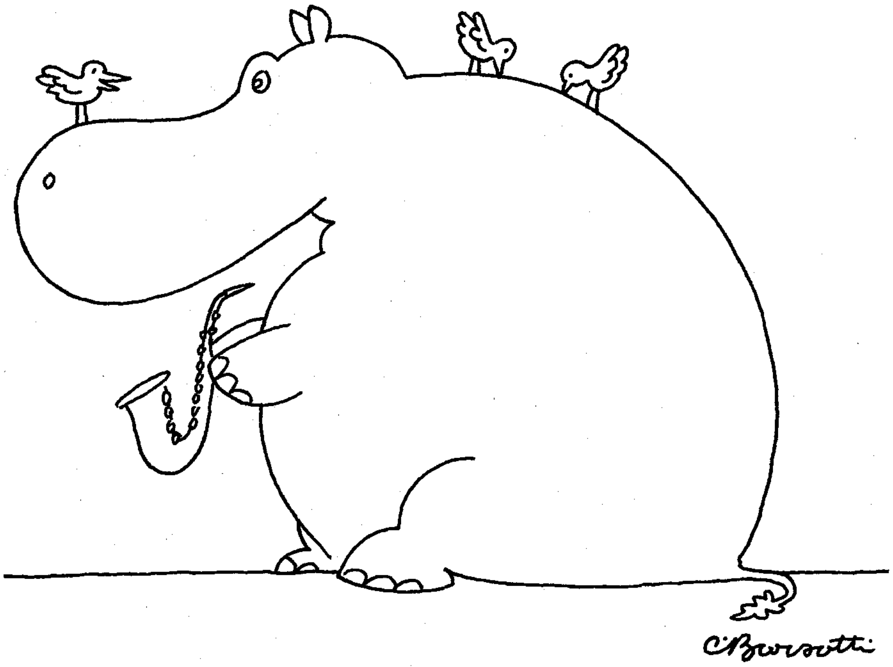

"Oh, for heaven's sake, don't feel that you have to entertain us, too."

• •

paintings. And then one night when Ernest was away this Polish kid got drunk and beat the shit out of me, and when Ernest got back and I told him about it he kicked me out."

"God," I said.

From her breast pocket she produced a cigarette and a lighter. She smoked quietly and continued to look at me.

"I cannot believe you called me and asked me to come get you," she said. "I absolutely cannot believe it."

Obviously this had all been a mistake. Of course I'd been thinking, somewhere in the back of my mind, that one thing might lead to another and we'd end up having sex or at least sleeping in the same bed. I sat up. "I'm sorry. You're right. Maybe I'll just get a cab back to the airport and—"

"Oh, chill out, please." She leaned over and switched off the lamp, and I could see the cigarette's tip gently rising and falling in the dark. "You can get your cab in the morning."

THE flight to Marshall took off without difficulty and with me on it, exhausted. I was eager to get home and go to bed, my own bed, and sleep for a great many hours. I'd arranged to take several days off from my job—I worked for a telemarketing company, listening in on the conversations of the telemarketers, making sure they said the right things—and I figured I would just keep a low profile and pretend I was still with my mother.

I wondered if Janine remembered that I, too, had lost a sibling. His name was Richard and he'd lived to the age of twenty. I was eighteen and had graduated from high school about a week before he died. He was in the back seat of a car driven by a drunken friend which careened into an abandoned quarry filled with about thirty feet of murky water. The other two people in the car died, too. It was an event of unequalled notoriety in our town, and one that cast upon me a tragic air that followed me all that summer, wrecking my relationships with the very friends who might have been able to make me feel better. In college I occasionally used Rich's death to get girls to sleep with me.

Richard was a careful and serious person. It is inconceivable that he would have been in this car, with these people, drinking. Our father was never the same; he died in his sixties of a heart attack sustained while trimming the hedge. But Mom didn't crack. She contained her grief, promptly screwing the lid on it and meting it out in private over a period of years. By tomorrow night she would be back in our old house, lying on the couch in her robe, telling her dog how happy she was to be home.

At the hospital, I'd carried the chair into her room but never did sit down. "Hemorrhoids?" I asked her.

She smiled as if she thought I'd known. Her lips moved a little before she spoke, uttering the ghost words that haunted the things she really said. "Paulie, you can't imagine the pain."

"You told me you were dying."

"I said no such thing."

"Do you know how much it cost for me to come out here? Do you know what it's like trying to get off work with this kind of notice?" I conjured the image of my boss, mushmouthed reprimands pouring from his face. "You lied to me."

"If it's the money that bothers you, Paulie, I'll pay for your ticket."

"It's not the money. I don't care about the money."

"I said I needed you."

"You lied."

"I wasn't lying," she made herself say. "I wasn't lying."

She lay back, spreading herself across the bed like a jelly. Tears welled in her eyes. But still I persisted, not yet sorry for what I was doing. "You could ask me. You could ask me to come, and I'd come."

"Not true," she whispered.

The crackle of an intercom brought me back to the plane. "Ladies and gentlemen," the captain was saying, "welcome to Flight 2195 to Marshall, Montana. I'm sorry to have to tell you that we're not going there. There's been some kind of incident at the Marshall airport, nothing for us to get excited about, but it looks like they're not letting us land there, so we're heading back to Seattle." A groan went up around me.

"He's lying," someone said nearby.

"What's there to lie about?" someone else replied.

"I don't want to know."

In a moment we were banking back toward the coast.

"RENT me a car," I told the ticket agent, who was young and alert, and had probably had a good night's sleep followed by several cups of hot coffee.

"The car-rental offices are right—"

"I know, I know. I want you to rent me a car that I can drive to Marshall. I want it instead of a plane ticket."

"I can get you on the next—"

"Just the car. It costs less than the

ticket, right? You're getting a great deal."

I was the first bad thing to happen to her so far that day. I felt a little sorry for her, but not really. She stared at me, her hands poised above the computer keyboard. I stared back.

"Come on," I said.

"I can't."

"You can. You can. You'll get rid of me and from here on you can have a pleasant day."

She rolled her eyes. "I wish," she said, and I knew I had her.

I LISTENED to her breathing over the car phone. Through the windshield I saw the lights of a plane pulsing; they rose in my field of vision, dimmed in the shaded strip of glass, and disappeared. How long would she wait for me to say something?

I said, "Don't. It's all right. Don't."

"I might as well just die," she said. "Maybe I should. Die, I mean."

"There's no reason to die. Don't say that."

I believe she was realizing that I was not who she thought I was and deciding what, if anything, to do about it. I had to say something, otherwise she would hang up. At that moment a trailer truck came roaring into the parking lot, slowed briefly as it passed my car, then sped up again, barrelling down the exit ramp. I watched its red running lights shrink into the distance.

"What was that?" she said.

"Trailer truck."

I could hear her licking her lips. "Please forgive me," she said. I tried to picture the room she was in: a sloppy twin bed, maybe, the sheets half pulled from the mattress and leaving a bare corner exposed; dinner plates with crumbs on them stacked on the carpet. I was starting to understand what a jerk I was, why I lived alone in a hick town, in a silent apartment, where no neighbors ever visited and no cries of passion ever sounded.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I'm sorry for what happened."

The blackness outside seemed to expand, taking on the shape of something huge. I found myself gripped by terror, and pressed the phone closer to my ear.

"Do you love me?" she whispered.

"Yes."

"Take me back!" she cried. "Will you take me back?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"Come home to me," she was saying, but I could barely hear.

WHEN I woke again it was still dark, and the phone lay silent on the passenger seat of the car. I opened the door and stepped out. It was cool, the air fresh, my fear gone. I walked to the low brick building the rest rooms were in and peed to the sound of quiet music. When I came out, I saw, for the first time, an illuminated booth in the parking lot, with a clean-shaven middle-aged man inside watching a small television. Had he been there all this time? How had I failed to notice him? He presided over a narrow wooden counter under a sign reading "Free Coffee."

"Free coffee?" he said, his words carrying across the parking lot with perfect clarity.

I went to him. Crickets were exploding in the weeds beyond the blacktop. A plastic basket of broken cookies lay on the counter.

"O.K.," I said. "And the cookies?"

He nodded. While he fixed my coffee, I tried to rearrange some of the fragments into one whole cookie, but they didn't fit. I picked up a few of the larger pieces. "What time is it?" I asked.

"Nearly three," he said, handing me the coffee. He had made it with cream, which is not the way I drink it, but it seemed important to accept what I was given.

The man didn't appear real to me, and because I thought I might be imagining him I never thanked him. For the rest of the drive, even with the radio going, I had to convince myself that there wasn't someone else in the car with me, hiding behind the driver's seat, or maybe in the trunk.

MY building was quiet when I arrived, and I couldn't get into my apartment, because my keys were in my duffelbag. I wondered if I would ever see the bag again. I walked around outside, trying the windows, which were locked, and I noticed a blinking red light inside: there was a message on the answering machine. Finally I went to my door. A box lay on the hallway floor, with my mother's return address scrawled in her florid hand. I sat down and leaned against the door, to wait for dawn and for the landlord to wake up. ♦

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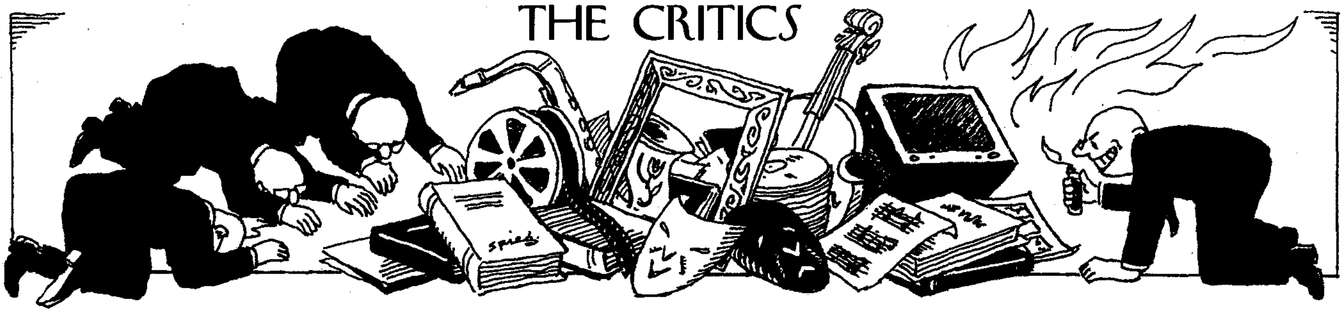


BOOKS

SISTER ACT

Did Betty Friedan go wrong, or did feminism?

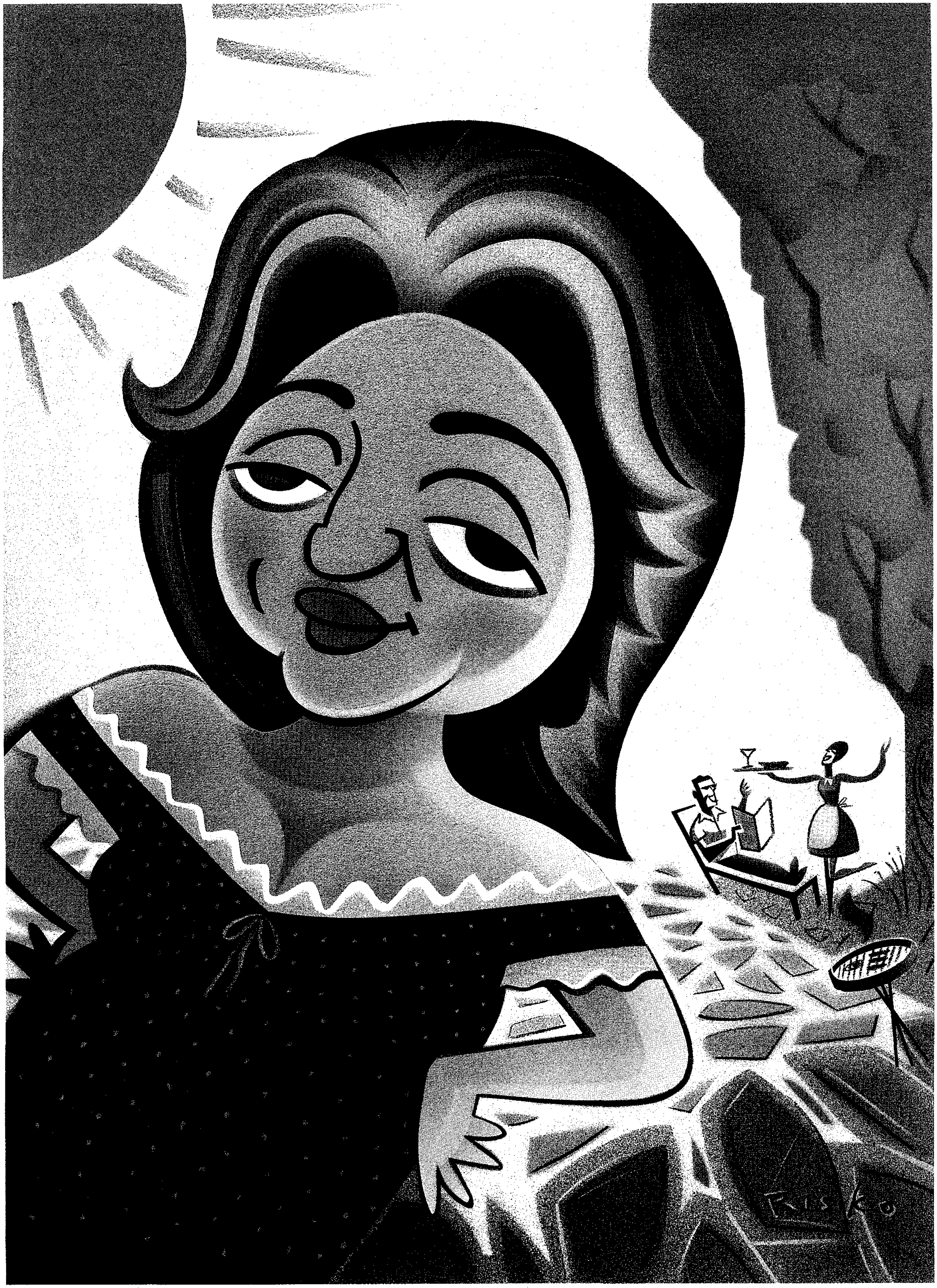
BY DAPHNE MERKIN

IN our ever-mutating cultural landscape, it's almost impossible to keep track of the way movements (women's lib) yield to countermovements ("power" feminism without special pleading), which yield to savvy coeds with book contracts for reactionary theses (the new modesty), which yield to fashion trends (geisha chic). Betty Friedan? Her name comes at us like a far-off echo—as though she were a suffragette fighting for the right to wear bloomers, instead of the woman who, not all that long ago, presided over the birth of modern feminism. Before there was Wendy Shalit or Katie Roiphe or Naomi Wolf or Susan Faludi, before Germaine Greer propounded her theatre-of-ideas version of female virility or Gloria Steinem flashed her come-fly-with-me smile on magazine covers, Friedan cast her eye over a nation of suburban housewives and determined that, inside their well-kept but underoccupied lives, they were going bonkers.

It was in 1963, the tail end of the quiescent fifties, that Friedan burst forth with "The Feminine Mystique"—the same year that Steinem, then an unpoliticized girl around town, published "The Beach Book," which sought to impart frilly wisdom about suntans and rich men. ("A landing party from Aristotle Onassis's yacht has just come ashore to ask you to join them. You say no.") Friedan's book had begun as a questionnaire circulated at her fifteenth Smith College reunion (she was class of '42), and after five years of work it metamorphosed into an expansive, sometimes overwrought argument with what she viewed as the Donna Reed culture of her time. Half sociological tract and half impassioned manifesto, "The Feminine Mystique" took on "the problem that has no name"—an amorphous malaise that afflicted college-educated American women, who smothered their children with attention, had unrealistic expectations of their husbands, and then sought to assuage their sense of quiet desperation by downing pills or having joyless extramarital affairs. That, she charged, was what came of being indoctrinated into society's rigid and largely unconscious notions of femininity. After pages and pages of deconstructing the fluffy content of the women's magazines (where the malaise "is solved either by dyeing one's hair blonde or by having another baby"), citing gloomy statistics and psychological surveys, Friedan moved to define the problem in the largest possible terms, as "simply the fact that American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities." The book, which had a first printing of three thousand copies, went on to become the No. 1 best-selling nonfiction paperback of 1964. Its author, in turn, became a celebrity, appearing on the newly born television talk shows, and an effective crusader, giving speeches around the country. In the summer of 1966, Friedan co-founded the National Organization for Women—known by its acronym, NOW—and provided her supporters with a serious platform from which to shake up the status quo.

These days, it is hard to remember that Friedan got a revolution going—that it was she who fought for equal pay, equal rights, day care, and legal abortion, so that other women could go on to examine their cervixes in consciousness-raising groups and muse wishfully on prehistoric matriarchies in the pages of *Ms.* For women under forty—the "I'm not a feminist, but . . ." generation—who are aware that Friedan was important but are vague about her exact contribution, she is a shadowy presence, an icon-without-portfolio. Given her age (she is seventy-eight) and our short collective memory, this isn't so remarkable. What is surprising, though, is how quickly she was pushed to the sidelines of the very movement she had founded. In 1972, when the fledgling National Women's Political Caucus gathered at the Democratic National Convention in Miami, Friedan lost her bid to be the official spokeswoman for the cause. Somewhere along the way, between the first stirrings of liberal activism and the increasingly radical, anti-male, and pro-lesbian tone that came to mark the women's movement as it gained momentum in the early seventies, Friedan was edged out of the spotlight in favor of other leaders—notably, Steinem and, briefly, Bella Abzug. "The cameras are clicking at Gloria," Nora Ephron observed in a gimlet-eyed account of the Miami gathering which she wrote for *Esquire*, "and Bella has swept in, trailed by a vortex of television crews, and there is Betty, off to the side, just slightly out of frame."

HOW and why did this happen? And what does it suggest about the internecine conflict that seemed to fracture the women's movement at the very moment of its ascent? The enigma of Friedan's rapid eclipse is at the heart of Judith Hennessee's new biography, "Betty Friedan: Her Life" (Random House;



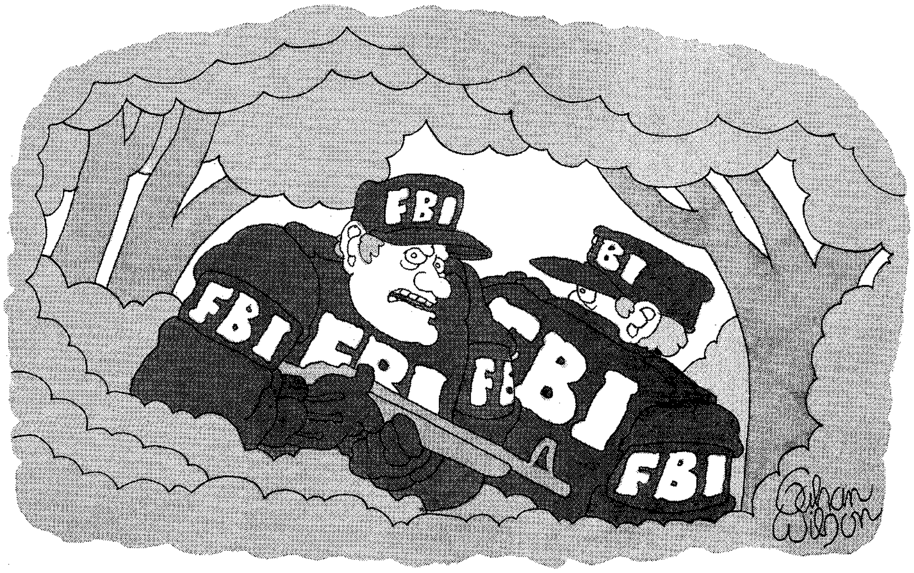
Betty Friedan sought to radicalize the suburban housewife; later, militants accused her of being one herself.

$27.95). It is a tale that hangs on a visibly unfixed nose, a tendency to yell, a commitment to broad-based social change rather than to identity politics, and a refusal to demonize family and the male sex. (For the record, right after finishing "The Feminine Mystique" Friedan considered getting a nose job, but she was concerned that the operation would change her signature gravelly voice.)

She was born Bettye Naomi Goldstein, in 1921, a year after women were given the vote. She grew up in Peoria, Illinois, where her family lived in a three-story red brick house in the best part of town. Though the Goldsteins were assimilated, they could not join the restricted Peoria Country Club, and socialized mainly with other Jews. Betty's mother, Miriam, liked to entertain and to fuss with her appearance; her father, Harry, who owned a jewelry store, enjoyed challenging his children intellectually. "He would pose math problems, which Betty solved in an instant, and discuss the political issues of the day," Hennessee writes. Betty had inherited her father's temper, and she fought with her critical, perfectionist mother over issues of grooming ("Miriam thought Betty deliberately made herself look like a frump") and personal style ("Where Miriam was diplomatic, Betty was blunt; where Miriam was gracious, Betty could barely accept a compliment"). In high school, Betty was passed over for a sorority, and she attributed that to the subtle workings of anti-Semitism rather than to her overbearing personality or her unconventional way of leading with her intellect. Hennessee writes, "The idea of hiding her brains, or at least not featuring them so prominently—of deferring to boys—did not occur to her."

Hennessee somewhat leadenly tries to link Friedan's future difficulties with her early experiences. The trouble she had maintaining her leadership of the movement and, especially, her disdainful treatment of other women are viewed as reënactments of her conflicts with her mother, her rivalries with her younger and prettier sister, Amy, and her sense of herself as an unappreciated outsider. Still, Friedan went off to Smith with no more than the standard allotment of insecurities for a brainy but somewhat homely young girl. Her anxieties manifested themselves mainly in asthma attacks that began to appear in her freshman year, but for the most part she had an abundance of energy and ambition. She majored in psychology and took a lot of writing courses, eventually running the college paper and starting a literary magazine. It was also at Smith that she developed an unsubversive, mink-coat brand of left-leaning politics, which would later be sniffed at by her more radical sisters; she immersed herself in Marxist texts and ran sympathetic stories on behalf of Peoria factory workers and the Smith maids, who went on strike in her senior year.

In 1942, Friedan graduated Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude, with a yearlong fellowship to study under the renowned psychologist Erik Erikson, at Berkeley. The following spring, she received another fellowship—"the most coveted prize in her field"—which would have enabled her to pursue a Ph.D. She turned it down, in the ancient (and, I daresay, still flourishing) female belief that the single-minded pursuit of achievement would cut her off from what she described in "The Feminine Mystique" as "the warm center of life"—from marriage and children. In later interviews, she blamed a boyfriend: "He said, 'You can take that fellowship, but you know I'll never get one like it. You know what it will do to us.'" The account may well have been a convenient reconstruction of a more general sense of conflict, but the message she had received was clear: as a woman, you couldn't have both personal and professional fulfillment. Nothing she saw around her—not the friends from college who "just wanted a rich marriage," or the lives of the spinster librarians from her home town, or the largely unmarried professors at Smith—suggested that it could be otherwise.



"Somehow or other he keeps spotting us!"

Shortly thereafter, Friedan moved to New York, and began writing for the Federated Press, a left-wing news agency. She was both eager to "prove herself with men" and sexually forthcoming in her quest for romance. In the spring of 1946, she went on a blind date with Carl Friedan, who was recently out of the Army; two months later, Carl moved in with her and in June of 1947 they married. The first of their three children was born in the fall of the next year, and by 1951 Betty Friedan had transformed herself into one of those suburban housewives whose chains she would rattle a decade later with the revelations of "The Feminine Mystique." Lured by a co-op nursery and more space, she and Carl, who worked in advertising, moved from a roach-infested Manhattan apartment to Parkway Village, in Queens, a garden-apartment development that had been built to house United Nations employees. The Friedans lived a version of the American dream: "They grilled hamburgers on charcoal barbecue grills and dipped their potato chips into the universal dip of the 1950s, sour cream mixed with dried Lipton's Onion Soup. Betty made salad dressing and supervised a maid who cooked." At the same time, both Betty and Carl drank to excess, and their marriage—which persisted for twenty-two years—was tempestuous to the point of physical violence. (Friedan was late to one of the first sit-ins that she organized—in 1969, in the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel, where women were excluded from noon to three—because her bruised face had to be heavily made up before she could appear in public.) She was what would nowadays be called a battered wife, except that she never called herself one and she gave as good as she got.

The trajectory that propelled Friedan from a homebound freelance-writing career—she wrote for *Charm*, *Parents*, and *Redbook*, among other such publications—to the front ranks of "women's lib" is, as often proves to be the case, a story of self-emancipation. The reader senses somewhere between the lines of "The Feminine Mystique" that Friedan is hacking a trail back to the stellar student she once was—the ambitious young woman about to make a bright future in a profession she loved, only to renounce it in favor of a lower-profile, more "female" presence. The glorification of domesticity—shiny floors, insistent married "togetherness," and an overconscientious style of mothering—and the fear of "masculinization" through intellectual development: these were pressures she had struggled against and sometimes yielded to. Her book makes for provocative reading even now, thirty-six years after it was first published. In spite of the far-reaching changes that have taken place, the psychological barriers to women's self-fulfillment that she described continue to exist.

"The Feminine Mystique" has obvious weaknesses: it is something of a hodgepodge, it owes more to Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" than it concedes, and its style is frequently overheated. (For example, women who adapt to the "housewife state" are likened to concentration camp victims.) It's also, unquestionably, an artifact of its time and place. Some of Friedan's terminology ("the servant problem") and attitudes (she refers to "the homosexuality that is spreading like a murky smog over the American scene") suggest that part of her had remained back in Peoria, at one of her mother's afternoon bridge parties. And although she vehemently attacked the way the media encouraged women to dust, iron, bake, and vacuum away their best years—"Occupation: Housewife" was her derisive term—it was unclear whom she had in mind to take care of the "details of life" when evolved women stopped attending to them, unless it was less evolved women. (Friedan's cavalier disregard for the "minutiae of housework" seems to have informed her own life: Carl Friedan claimed that his wife had "never washed one hundred dishes during twenty years of marriage.") No one has ever come up with an answer to this problem, and one might well wonder whether the busy-hands-at-home empire of Martha Stewart isn't a more insidious and time-consuming version of what "The Feminist Mystique" was railing against.

Whatever the book's limitations, I find it silly to fault its author, as some people do, for not speaking to women of all classes, sexual predilections, and races: ironically, this sort of "inclusive" rhetoric is in part to blame for pushing the women's movement off the main road and into the byways. (In Marcia Cohen's 1988 account "The Sisterhood," the journalist Susan Brownmiller recalls the days when "the only person who could get up and say something and not be shouted down was a black lesbian single mother on welfare.") Friedan was assuredly writing from and for a particular perspective: the middle-class, white, and heterosexual reader of *McCall's*, who sensed that something was missing but couldn't quite put her finger on it. She knew her audience—"the modern American housewife that I myself was helping to create, writing for the women's magazines"—and she tempered her politics and her ideology to fit its needs. Although many of her convictions arose from her leftism and her early journalistic involvement with labor organizations, it strikes me as an exaggeration to see her, as Daniel Horowitz does in his recent book "Betty Friedan and the Making of 'The Feminine Mystique,'" as a closet Marxist who played down her sympathies to avoid the searchlight of McCarthyism and to gain a place in the mainstream.

Friedan's abiding sense of realpolitik was both her weakness and her strength: rather than overturning the patriarchal order—on Capitol Hill or in the Oak Room—she sought to reposition women within it. "Betty thought attention to such issues as Vietnam and welfare would interfere with the main goal, which was electing women," Hennessee

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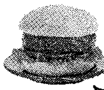

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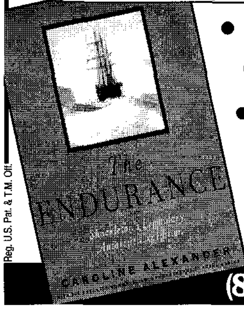

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BRIEFLY NOTED

LORDS OF THE HORIZONS, by Jason Goodwin (Holt; $32.50). In this account of the rise and fall of the Ottomans, Goodwin describes what it was like to live in every part of their empire—which by 1683 stretched from northern Africa to southern Russia and from the gate of Vienna to the border of Persia. The Ottomans, an obscure Anatolian tribe, developed a meticulously disciplined army and began to expand in the fourteenth century. Their greatest triumph would eventually prove to be their undoing: their conquest of Constantinople, in 1453, sent Europeans exploring the oceans, and the Mediterranean gradually lost its commercial supremacy. Goodwin's writing is poised whether he is discussing the tulip mania that came to symbolize the court's hedonism in the seventeen-twenties or the invasion of the Balkans.

THE MUTE'S SOLILOQUY, by Pramoedya Ananta Toer; translated from the Indonesian by Willem Samuels (Hyperion East; $27.50). Most of these essays, notes, and letters were written in the Buru Island Penal Colony, where Toer spent ten years as a political prisoner without ever standing trial or even being formally accused. Toer records his arrest, imprisonment, and torture in calm, controlled prose, but it is in the essays on his family history and in the letters to his children, which he knows they will never receive, that the book becomes more than a political document: you can sense the writer working to keep himself sane.

GIRLFRIEND, by Holly Brubach, photographs by Michael James O'Brien (Random House; $39.95). Although drag has been transformed from a demimonde activity to a mainstream entertainment, it hasn't lost its potential to disconcert. In this globe-trotting tour of the drag scene from Bangkok to Berlin, Brubach's chapters read like a series of super-smart postcards, explaining drag as "a lexicon of mannerisms" while also musing on the questions of gender role and stereotype it so provocatively raises. Balancing her informality are seventy-nine impeccable photographs by Michael James O'Brien, in color and in black-and-white, evoking by turns Avedon's elegance, Annie Leibovitz's puckishness, and Brassaï's access to the private moment.

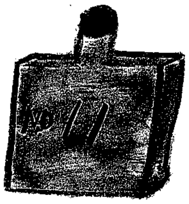
NAME-DROPPING, by John Kenneth Galbraith (Houghton Mifflin; $26). Galbraith never pretends to greater intimacy than he achieved with the public figures he describes in these brief essays, but each portrait tells us something we wouldn't have otherwise known. His nuggets include F.D.R.'s beguiling way with feuding subordinates and Albert Speer's venting of his contempt for drunken Nazi leaders. Galbraith doesn't belittle failure: he retained his affection for Adlai Stevenson even after he recognized that Stevenson was a poor candidate for the Presidency. Most of his anecdotes are guided by admiration, and emphasize what he learned from his subjects.

writes. "Her basic issues remained . . . equal pay and equal rights and the situation of ordinary working women." She was never a theoretician, like Kate Millett (whose "Sexual Politics" gave the movement serious intellectual credentials), or a loony purist, like Ti-Grace Atkinson (whom Friedan pushed out of the presidency of New York NOW after she spoke to the press in support of Valerie Solanas, who had just shot Andy Warhol), or an inflammatory anarchist, like Robin Morgan (who had founded WITCH—Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell—before going on to be an editor of *Ms.*). As the climate of protest heated up in the seventies, she kept her sights firmly on the center, even while it failed to hold.

In fact one could argue that Friedan's unwavering commitment to a populist constituency in the face of growing pressure from more radical groups—especially militant lesbians, whom she referred to as "the lavender menace"—is what did her in. "Betty had no patience with the lesbians," Jacqui Ceballos, an early supporter, recalls. "She covered her face with her hands and said, 'I don't want to hear what people do in bed.'" Was this simply provincialism? Or did Friedan foresee that as the movement tried to corral the disenfranchised women at the margins—not just lesbians but black women—it would alienate the middle-of-the-road Jane Doe she hoped to reach, and feminism would lose its crowd appeal?

There were also personal factors that loosened her grip on power. Friedan yelled when she didn't get her way, and her hunger for publicity was insatiable. "Among those who were disillusioned with her," Hennessee writes, "the standard view of Betty was that of a microphone hog." She displayed "a breathtaking incivility for which she was fiercely resented," and had little patience for the navel-gazing turn that the movement took, scornfully dismissing consciousness-raising as "mental masturbation." She lacked as well Steinem's knack for snappy sound bites that dissed men or marriage. ("We are becoming the men we wanted to marry," and so on.) Nor, being short and chubby and frazzled, did she cut a telegenic figure. The leggy, serenely beautiful interloper who stole Friedan's show—Friedan called her simply "The Hair"—was everything that she wasn't: placating, impersonal to the point of remoteness, a soft touch for underdog causes. Steinem had, as a fellow-activist recalled, "this bubble of untouchability around her," and, rather than overtly aspiring to leadership, she arranged to have it thrust upon her. Steinem won the position of spokeswoman for the National Women's Political Caucus, the job Friedan had coveted, despite the fact that she "said she did not want it and had deliberately stayed away from the meeting."

Of course, even if Friedan had been Miss Congeniality, she would have lost out to Steinem, who was the trophy feminist best able to shill for the movement. For one thing, she had an ability to communicate the movement's concerns casually, as though they were no more threatening than T-shirt slogans; for another, men responded to her, no matter what those slogans were. Friedan attacked Steinem in public and in private, accusing her as early as 1972 of "ripping off the movement for personal profit" and continuing to discuss Steinem's "perceived hypocrisy," as Hennessee puts it, more than twenty years later. "Here is someone who always dressed beautifully, chic-ly, and all that," Friedan complained, "and told other women they didn't have to bother to wear makeup or shave their legs."



Hennessee's account, in its determination to be fair, in true sisterly fashion, to all sides, sacrifices a chance to offer a trenchant analysis of the movement's gradual implosion. Friedan's rapid rise and fall suggests a larger, seemingly inevitable pattern, whereby the visionary founder, scripting the future, must in time be cast off as a fogey, captive to the past. So the integrationists of the civil-rights era—the James Farmers and John Lewises—would be elbowed aside by their Black Power successors, the Stokely Carmichaels and Huey Newtons. And Friedan, once the rampaging polemicist of the picket-fence set, would soon find herself scorned by the burn-the-house-down types—the Redstockings, New York Radical Women, and all the rest. She was easily caricatured by a newer and angrier generation as a kind of Joan Crawford of feminism, the aging star pouting in her trailer. Revolutions devour their old

Hennessee steps gingerly around these troublesome points; she's the proverbial peacemaker, smiling now at the girl with the golden tresses, who is popular with the boys, and now at the plainer, smarter girl, whose obvious need to dominate her peers insures her rejection. One comes away from Hennessee's book with a sense of too many prima donnas (and their attendant groupies) battling each other for center stage. The maw of the media grinds busily behind this story, hungry for marketable products, chewing up and spitting out both icons and issues. Friedan was an improbable product from the start, and Steinem was finally the one who endured, her image resistant to overexposure or criticism. The stature of the movement itself turned out to be more precarious: Steinem's attempts to correct Friedan's bourgeois biases and court the clamorously disenfranchised would prove too radical for the mainstream, too mainstream for the radicals. Hennessee's book nonetheless makes for fairly absorbing reading—not least because it reveals the rancorous underside of sisterhood. The amount of envy and hostility that percolated just beneath the utopian hopes and high-minded principles will not come as a shock to any woman who's ever made it through high school, but all the infighting does give one pause concerning the fairer sex's vaunted reputation for making nice.

It would be convenient, at least when it comes to the writing of cultural history, if the private lives of public figures matched their onstage selves: saintly idealists would invariably be kind to their children; female firebrands would assert themselves at the dinner table; and revolutionaries would be above petty snobberies. Of course, a great part of the allure of reading biographies lies in this very discrepancy between image and reality. "The persona she had developed had taken over the person," Hennessee observes of Friedan. "It protected her from competition, but it also demanded constant care and feeding, separating her from what she truly craved—love and intimacy."

Which brings us to men, who Friedan always insisted were not the enemy but simply part of the equation. Male companionship—a "gentleman friend," in her somewhat quaint phrase—continued to

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be important to her after her divorce. In "The Second Stage," published in 1981, she placed men near "the cutting edge" of the next phase of feminism, and indicted the first stage of the movement for being too selfish—all of which led some critics to suggest that she was retreating from much of what she'd said in "The Feminine Mystique." In fact, the notion that men needed to be reëducated, freed from their own mystique, was one she had long advocated. But, despite Robert Bly, Sam Keene, et al., the world in its vastness is resistant to change, and, now that men have given women greater parity, they seem as leery of female power as ever. The political assuredly isn't personal: at best, the struggle for equality brings about higher wages; at worst, it leaves women stranded without alimony. It sometimes seems that we have merely exchanged one costume for another, aprons for suits, and the results have not always approximated the dream of liberation. Indeed, they often look like the old curses of loneliness and overwork in new guise. Women are certainly freer to choose who they are and how they wish to connect to others. But there is yet to be a political or social movement that can accommodate the vagaries of personal fulfillment, which are always idiosyncratic and unheeding of the party line. "People didn't trust her to speak for the group," Steinem complained of Friedan. "She always spoke for herself." It was meant as a reproach, but it could also be read as a tribute to Friedan's irrepressible individuality, and to the elusive nature of desire. What do women want? Ask them one at a time. ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

HORN OF PLENTY

The composer who knows no boundaries.

BY FRED KAPLAN

On the far edge of the Lower East Side, just off Delancey, you turn down Norfolk Street and suddenly feel lost. It's desolate, this block: abandoned storefronts, barbed-wire parking lots, too few street lamps. Halfway down, however, you come upon a concrete building that's bursting with light and noise. Until a few years ago, it was an old kosher winery. Now it's a night club called Tonic, and during the past year it has emerged as a place to be in the everything-goes culture of downtown music. On a recent drizzly night, a few hundred downtowners piled into Tonic to listen to the saxophonist-composer-conductor-producer John Zorn.

Zorn, who is a lanky forty-five-year-old, ambled onto the stage, wearing shoulder-length brown hair, a prankish grin, combat fatigues, and an orange T-shirt that was emblazoned with "abracadabra" spelled in Hebrew. Zorn has a reputation as a bad boy of the avant-garde, and he likes to bleat through duck calls or yank the mouthpiece off his alto sax and blow like a banshee. The ambience of Tonic—a long, dark, narrow space with scant seating and plaster peeling from the stone walls—suits this image well.

But on that night Zorn was leading his quartet, Masada, and, to anyone expecting an orgy of sonic shredding, Masada must have come as something of a shock. Greg Cohen, the bass player, started the set with a hard-plucked bass walk that would have fitted right in with early Miles Davis. The drummer, Joey Baron, pounded out a multiplicity of rhythms, mainly on the tomtoms, recalling the funk and conga bands of the sixties. Then Zorn and Dave Douglas, the lyrical trumpeter, let loose a lilting melody with a swing so intense yet insouciant that Ellington himself might have smiled.

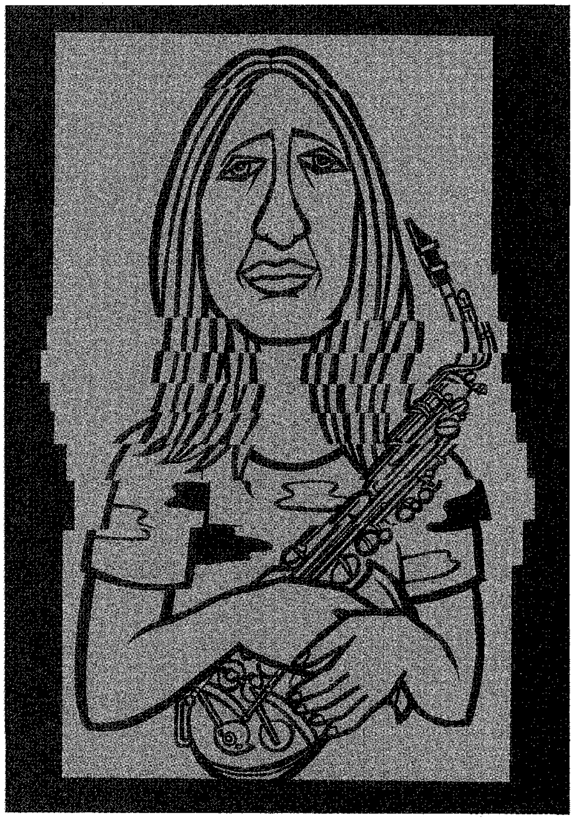
Zorn calls Masada his "Jewish-music" band, but this was a long way from Catskills klezmer. It was something all its own: a mix of straight-ahead jazz, film-noir melodrama, free improvisation, twisted blues, and bittersweet balladry—all colored with a sly Sephardic tinge. Zorn blew with a tart, zesty tone and hair-raising fluency. Now and then, he unleashed his trademark assortment of squeals and squawks, but the effect was more witty than aggressive.

Zorn is a one-man music industry. In the five and a half years since he founded Masada, he has written two hundred and five compositions for the group. He has also written dozens of very different sorts of pieces—for string trios and quartets, solo piano, woodwind ensembles, electronic grunge bands, and symphonic orchestras. Eleven new recordings of his music were released in 1998—seven of them on his own label, Tzadik, which, in Hebrew, means a charismatic leader who performs righteous deeds. In Tzadik's four years of existence, it has issued a hundred and forty-two albums, most of which are by other musicians, some of whom would have no other outlet were it not for Zorn.

The essence of "downtown" music is the blending or blurring of traditional boundaries. But even the transcendent downtown composer Philip Glass, whose early minimalism was a hybrid of Eastern repetitiveness and Western harmonies, seems a piker next to Zorn. Virtually every kind of music ever written, ever played, at any time and in any place, is now on compact disk, and Zorn wants his music to embrace it all. His impulse is not, in the political sense, multicultural. The range of his musical interests is the product of a voracious personality: Zorn is not only the arch-downtowner but an end-of-the-millennium scavenger, rummaging through the cultural clutter and pulling together whatever he deems of value.

One recent evening, Zorn paced about his apartment, a walkup in the East Village, riffling through the recordings he had bought within the past week: a boxed set of fifteen CDs devoted to Islamic music ("Absolutely amazing," he said); an album called "Jew's Harps of the World," on Playasound ("A really good French label, just incredible"); a collection of Joik music ("It's Lapp chanting music—I've been searching for this for years"); Miles Davis's "Bitches Brew: The Complete

Sessions" ("What a motherfucker! He's mixing all these different kinds of music, sitar with jazz musicians with a funk beat, thirty years ago!"); a newly remastered set of Bernstein-conducted Mahler symphonies; a Smithsonian anthology of banjo music by Dock Boggs; and "The Pacific Jazz Bud Shank Studio Sessions." Zorn said of Shank, an underrated alto-saxophone player, "He reminds me of jazz players who take that music, along with surf music, soundtracks, and world music, and manage to put them together into a new kind of musical form." Zorn might, though he didn't say so, have been describing himself.



John Zorn: "My dark is nasty dark."

Zorn's apartment consists of an entrance foyer flanked by two small rooms, in which every inch of wall space is covered by shelves, sagging with the artifacts of everything that has influenced him as a composer: twenty-five thousand LPs and seven thousand CDs; two thousand books of art, philosophy, history, and literature; and two thousand movies on video or laser disk. The only pieces of furniture are a mattress on the floor and a small desk, where he composes. Once upon a time, there was a kitchen, but it was ripped out to make room for more books and recordings. Lacking a refrigerator, Zorn either eats out with friends or has his meals delivered.

Five years ago, he acquired the apartment overhead. He had a hole cut into the ceiling, and he put up a ladder to connect the two floors. Zorn has spent a lot of time in Japan, playing in avant-garde Japanese bands and becoming fluent in Japanese, and he designed the upstairs apartment as a place for Eastern-style reflection. It's a space as light and airy as the downstairs is dark and cramped, furnished with shoji screens, tatami mats, and a stone water fountain that gurgles smoothly. The walls are draped with Chinese, Tibetan, and Surrealist art works. There's no kitchen up here, either, but in the back there is a sauna. Zorn's living quarters are, like the man and his music, preposterously expansive yet meticulously well ordered. Over several hours of conversation, he reminded me of Tom Hulce's Mozart, in "Amadeus"—so goofily casual in manner that it was hard to imagine the disciplined artist underneath.

Zorn likes to put on a movie in the background while he writes, to set an appropriate mood. "Old 'Colombo' episodes are good, film noir, anything with atmosphere," he told me in the wry, nasal tones of a native New Yorker. He approaches writing music as a problem-solving art—"like a crossword puzzle"—and he imposes restrictive conditions on himself to keep things challenging and fresh. When he sat down to write the tunes for Masada—most of them on an inexpensive three-octave Casio keyboard—he set three rules: No tune could take up more than five staves, or lines of music paper. Instruments should not be specified—any kind of band should be able to play the music. And the songs had to be composed in one of the two "Jewish scales"—a major scale with the second note flat or a minor scale with the fourth note sharp. For more elaborate classical pieces, he jotted

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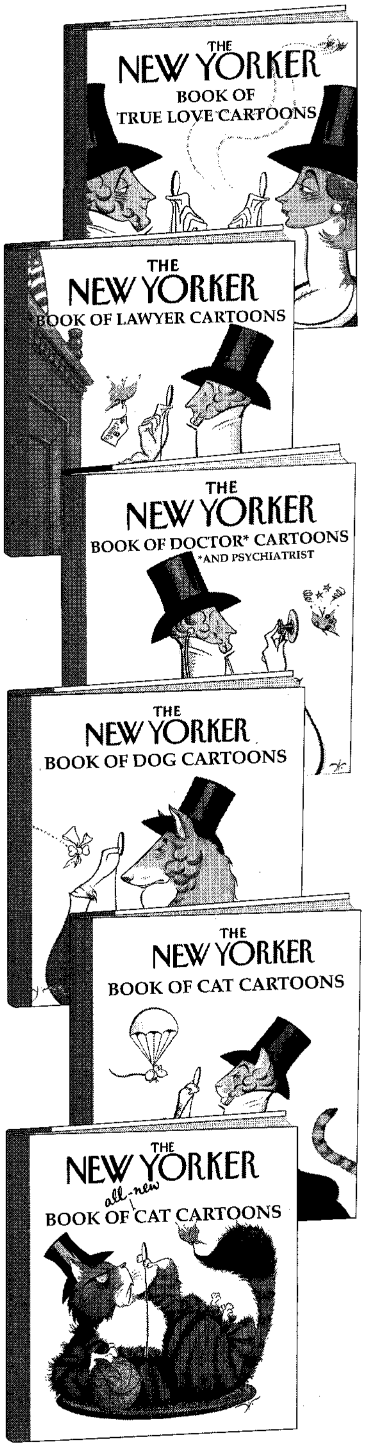
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down motifs, phrases, or sheer sounds on index cards, then shuffled them around, searching for the right order of musical events. These days, he tends to write straight through, from start to finish. Almost always, he begins with a programmatic subject in mind, often inspired by an author or a visual artist whose work he likes. For "Duras," a piece written in 1996, he conceived of "every single moment, every card," as a "description" of a scene or a mood in the life or writings of Marguerite Duras.

This thirty-five-minute work for small chamber ensemble has been sumptuously recorded on Zorn's Tzadik label. As I listen to the piece's three "books" and an "epilogue"—lush, slow whole notes on violin, against dark organ chords and sharply shifting rhythms on percussion—there's no mistaking the French writer's seductive melancholy, a romantic gleam with an edge.

But what kind of music is this? Zorn's tastes and styles are so eclectic that no one group of cultural guardians has warmly welcomed him into the fold. "I don't fit comfortably in any particular world," he told me with a shrug. "The classical establishment—forget about it. I didn't pay those dues, I didn't study with this guy or go to that conservatory." The keepers of the jazz realm—from the Village Vanguard to Jazz at Lincoln Center—have never opened their doors to him, either. Zorn has confronted the problems of classification by creating an alternative universe—complete with his own record label and his own management—in which he can make all the decisions.

He has his champions in the mainstream world. David Harrington, the artistic director and first violinist of the Kronos Quartet, told me, "There are very few musicians who have as wide a knowledge of sounds as John Zorn. His vocabulary is astonishing." Between 1987 and 1993, Zorn wrote four string quartets for Kronos. "I'd compare it to a sequence of Bartók string quartets, in terms of their variety, their images," Harrington said. Kronos has recorded the first two quartets, "Forbidden Fruit" and "Cat O' Nine Tails," on Nonesuch. Next month, Tzadik is coming out with a disk of the last three quartets, along with a new addition, "Kol Nidre."

But you have to go out of your way to hear John Zorn live, and, in the severely fragmented New York music community, only the faithful bother. As an admiring new-music composer, Aaron Jay Kernis, put it to me, "He does so many different kinds of things—he dips his toe into the concert world from time to time, then disappears just as suddenly."

ZORN was born in 1953, and he grew up in Flushing, Queens. His mother was a professor of education, his father a hairdresser. Neither took much interest in music. At the age of eight, though, Zorn saw "Phantom of the Opera," with Lon Chaney. "The Phantom played the organ and I thought he was great, so I got into organ music—especially Bach," Zorn said. He taught himself to read music by buying scores and following them while he listened to his Bach albums. Movies continued to expand his musical tastes. "Fantasia" got him interested in Stravinsky, and "2001: A Space Odyssey" lured him to Ligeti. He says he was "blown away" by Ennio Morricone's guitar-menacing score for "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," adding, "Even now, I like music that has a sense of drama, that tells a story, that works in moments." By the age of fourteen, he could navigate Bartók's string quartets and Berg's "Lyric Suite." He began writing what he calls "little piano pieces, organ music, little operas." He played in a rock band, and he loved the Beatles, the Doors, and the Beach Boys. "But I gravitated to Frank Zappa pretty quickly," he said. "You know, the weird shit." Zorn studied music at the United Nations International School in Manhattan and, then, briefly, at Webster University, a small liberal-arts campus in St. Louis. It was there that he became serious about jazz and learned to play the alto sax.

By the time he returned to New York, in the mid-seventies, mainstream jazz, crushed by the onslaught of rock and roll, had grown stale. A group of younger musicians were creating their own clubs, turning their apartment lofts, in the East Village and SoHo, over to early-morning jam sessions for cutting-edge musicians such as David Murray, Sam Rivers, Julius Hemphill, and Arthur Blythe.

Rock and classical music were undergoing a similar transformation. At the Kitchen, in SoHo, Glass and Steve Reich were churning their mixtures of East and West. Clubs such as CBGB brought forth punk. Zorn fell in with an esoteric subset of this scene. "We took all the different strands that were lying open in the seventies and tied them together," he told me. He practiced his saxophone from eight to ten hours a day, then played all night to small audiences in friends' apartments. Zorn looks back wistfully on his work in those years as "the weirdest fucking shit you can imagine."

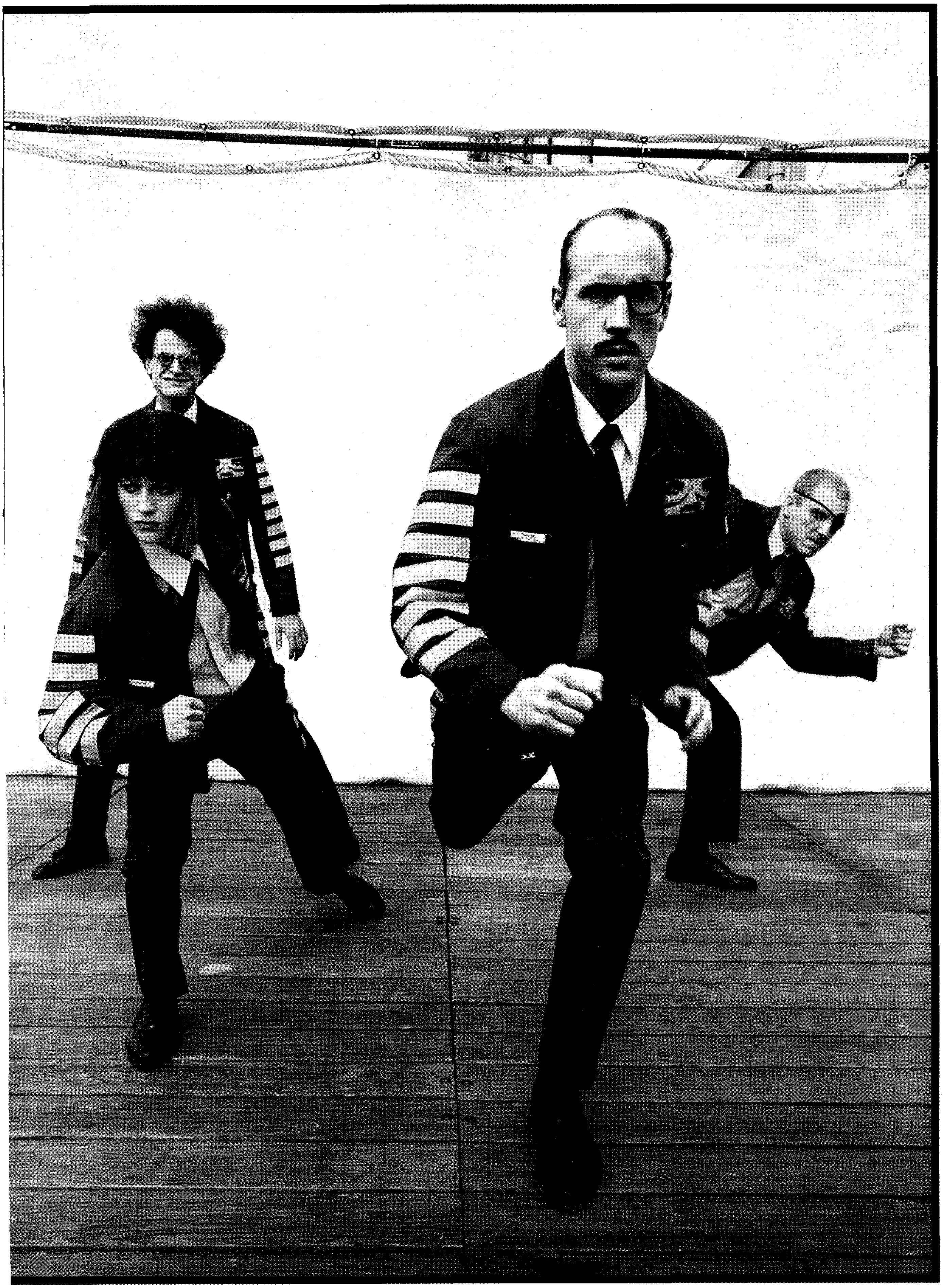
In 1979, Bob Ostertag, an electronics keyboardist, asked Zorn to play with him at a club called Squat Theatre as part of a marathon jazz festival. Ostertag was booked to go on at midnight, when the event was expected to attract a full house. "John said he'd do it, but only if we played at two in the afternoon, when nobody would be there," Ostertag recalled. "He said that if he played in front of more than twenty people it would wreck the music." They ended up playing at two, as Zorn had demanded, before a literally empty room.

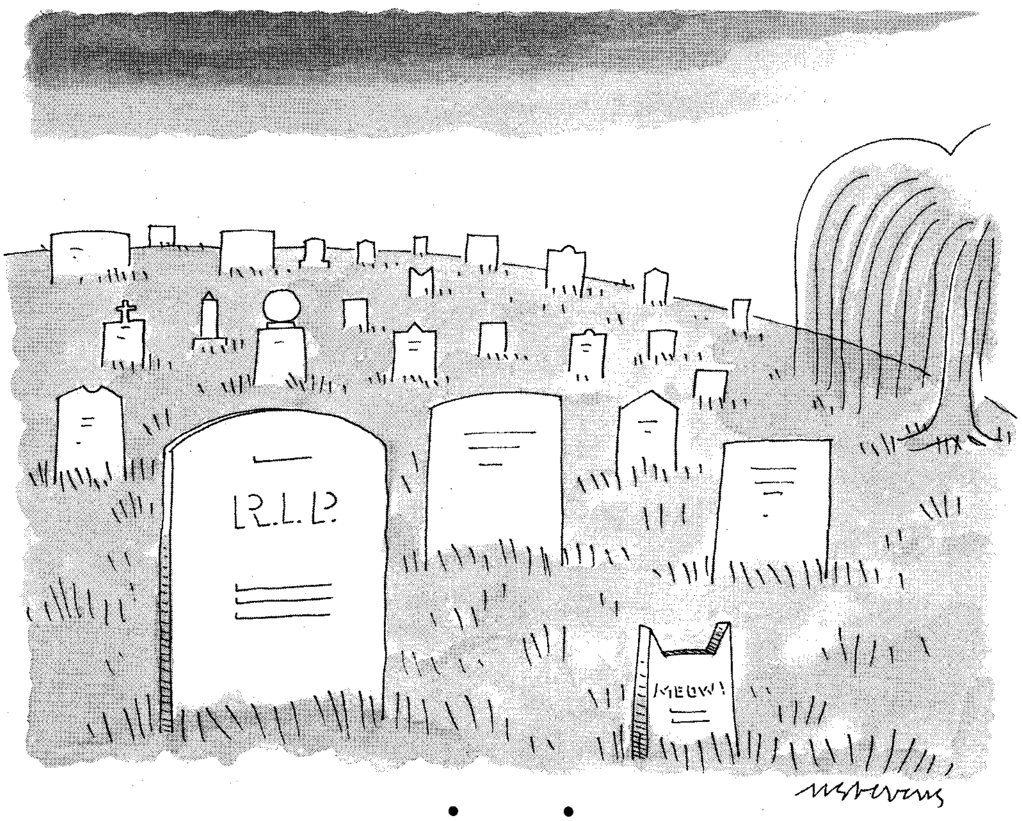
In the mid-to-late eighties, Zorn issued five recordings on Nonesuch: three

DOWNRIGHT MAD

The Upright Citizens Brigade (Matt Besser, Amy Poehler, Matt Walsh, and Ian Roberts) may be the most anarchic comics to come out of the late Del Close's legendary Chicago improv company, Second City. In their brand of sketch comedy, a theatre-of-the-absurd chaos develops from seemingly unrelated threads, which eventually come together with surreal precision. The début episode of their second season on Comedy Central, on June 14th, sends up competitiveness: parents enter their infants in "baby fights," for instance, to determine who has the best kid. It begins with the troupe delivering a human-cheetah hybrid that at birth can run as fast as the wind. This week, the Brigade hosts a tribute to Close at the U.C.B. Theatre, where every weekend they continue to perform their insanely popular shows "Spaghetti Jesus" and "A.S.S.S.S.C.A.T. 2000."

Photograph by Max Vadukul





were tribute albums to Ennio Morricone, Ornette Coleman, and the pulp novelist Mickey Spillane; the other two were compilations of jazz and movie themes. Zorn's albums were critically praised, and they sold well. Before long, his concerts, both in the United States and abroad, were attracting capacity crowds.

"Nonesuch wanted to make me the poster boy for postmodernism, but they didn't know what I was about," Zorn told me. "I was going in dark places. Kronos goes in dark places, too, but they're lovely dark. My dark is nasty dark." The end to Zorn's mainstream period came when he wanted to put out an album with a cover showing a dead man's head on a platter. Nonesuch refused to release it. Zorn took his tapes and walked.

By then Zorn was often in Japan, and was having a rough time of it. "I was feeling so alienated," he recalled, clearly still upset by the experience. "Japan was a culture I gave so much to, tried to immerse myself in, and I wasn't accepted." One album from this period, "Torture Garden," featured track titles on the order of "Jazz Snob Eat Shit," "Speedfreaks," and "Whiplash." Zorn recalled, "I was angry, and this was very angry music." Around that time, several articles about him noted that in German the word "Zorn" means anger. In the early nineties, he began exploring his Jewish roots. "I got into Judaism as a result of one too many trips to Germany," he said, laughing. "The remarks you hear, the things you see."

Although Zorn's mother is Jewish, and he grew up in a Jewish neighborhood, he had not been exposed to any aspects of Jewish culture. In 1992, he wrote a grim, frightening forty-three-minute tone poem called "Kristallnacht," which manages to evoke life in the shtetl, Nazi Storm Troopers, and the struggle in the postwar years to build a Jewish sanctuary. It was Zorn's first attempt to expand his pastiche approach—snippets of a mourning cello, a prayerful violin, shards of noise, a dancing klezmer clarinet—into an extended and coherent cinematic piece. It was also his first experiment that involved incorporating Judaism into his music, and, in that sense, it was cathartic.

"I realized that a Jew is someone who naïvely believes that if he gives selflessly to his host culture he'll be accepted," he told me. "But we are the world's outsiders." In Judaism Zorn found a sense of a larger community, in which he fit precisely because of his isolation. "This is what was attractive to me about the tribe—the culture of the outsider. After 'Kristallnacht,' I wanted to create something positive, something that celebrated all the things we've accomplished, instead of always complaining about the 'terrible things that have happened' and saying, 'Oh, why are we treated this way?' "

His celebration was the formation of his group Masada, which took its name from the hilltop fortress where a group of Jewish rebels committed suicide rather than surrender to Roman conquerors. With the founding of Masada came a turn to more traditional musical forms. A few years earlier, Zorn had led a trio and a quartet that put an eccentric spin on tunes by some of the more unjustly neglected jazz masters of the fifties—Sonny Clark, Hank Mobley, Freddie Redd, and Kenny Durham—but he had never written his own jazz tunes, with, as he put it, "melody, rhythm, chords."

In September of 1993, to celebrate his fortieth birthday, Zorn played a month of concerts—thirty nights in a row, with different music each night—at the Knitting Factory, which had become the focal point of downtown music. One night, he played with a group that he had just used for the soundtrack of an independent movie, consisting of Joey Baron, Greg Cohen, and Dave Douglas. "I brought along a couple of the Masada tunes, pulled one of them out, and it was magic." Zorn liked the results so much that he wrote an additional hundred and five Masada tunes—still following the same rules—and recorded many of them on ten albums, entitled "One," "Two," and so forth, up to "Ten."

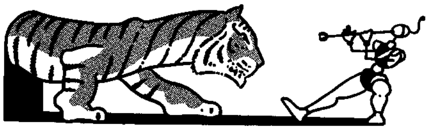
Three years ago, Zorn's music took another turn, with the formation of a chamber group that he called Bar Kokhba; it was named after a messianic warrior who was a sort of second-century Jewish Che Guevara. The idea behind the new ensemble—a sextet comprising some of his favorite downtown musicians, among them Mark Feldman on violin, Erik Friedlander on cello, Marc Ribot on guitar, Cyro Baptista on percussion, and Masada's Cohen and Baron on bass and drums—was to give his Masada pieces a gentler sound. Zorn calls Bar Kokhba his "easy-listening" band. He exaggerates—the music retains plenty of edge. But it does tend toward softer dynamics, lusher harmonies, and more strolling rhythms than anything he has done before.

Recalling the early days of Bar Kokhba, Marc Ribot, a guitarist for the Lounge Lizards and various Zorn bands, says, "John was very specific in delineating what kind of sound I should use. My first vibe was to go at it as a James (Blood) Ulmer thing with lots of distortion. But he said, 'Nope, nope, nope.' He very much wanted a surf sound. We tried a bunch of different guitars, then a bunch of different amps, until we got exactly the sound he wanted." When Bar Kokhba played at Tonic last fall, Zorn was seated in front of the musicians, smiling and tapping his foot, giving them hand cues to when one of them should take up the melody, switch to a new harmony, begin improvising, or stop. "There's still a sense of spontaneity, but I'm in total control of what happens," he says.

Zorn is also fierce about controlling his concert environments. One spring night last year, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was in town with Vaclav Havel, the President of the Czech Republic. Havel, who is a fan of rock and new music, had called up his old friend Lou Reed, and Reed had suggested that they all go to the Knitting Factory, to hear Bar Kokhba. Albright and her entourage, which included several State Department aides, were given V.I.P. seating in the balcony and were served drinks and hors d'oeuvres. While the band played, they chattered away as if they were attending a diplomatic reception. Finally, Zorn shouted, "Hey, you up in the balcony! Shut the fuck up! We're trying to play music down here!" The crowd below cheered, and Albright and her aides quieted down. More than a year later, Zorn makes no apologies. "Sure, I knew who was up there," he told me. "Fuck them. They were so loud, so obnoxious. Maybe I should have sugarcoated it, but I'm not known for that." He laughed. "That was great to do, because the band got such a kick out of it."

Zorn is notorious for his reluctance to be interviewed or photographed. (His conversations with me marked his first extensive contact with the press in eight years.) When he learned that the Knitting Factory had been Webcasting not only all the club's shows but also all the rehearsals and sound checks, he vowed that he would never again lead one of his bands there. (The Knitting Factory has since changed its policy, Webcasting only with the musicians' permission.) Immediately, he went looking for a new venue, and on the Lower East Side he found one at Tonic, a bar that had opened only recently. He offered to put on a big music festival, called his downtown musician friends, and booked all of last July and August—sixty nights, with a different band each night. Following Zorn's lead, Tonic now turns the club's programming over to a different musician or composer each month. (Zorn is reprising his festival at Tonic all this month and next. He is also modifying his Knitting Factory ban: he booked Masada to play at its jazz festival this Tuesday. "I'll play the Knit, but only for a guarantee, not for the door, like I used to," he explained.)

WITH the launching of his own label, Tzadik, in 1995, Zorn finally gained complete control of his domain. The project was made possible by an unlikely windfall. Several times during the past decade, an Oregon-based advertising firm called Wieden & Kennedy has hired Zorn to write music for offbeat television commercials. The commercials aren't your typical jingles; they're pure, unfiltered Zorn—collages of cartoon themes, thrasher noise, film noir, the works. Wieden & Kennedy pays Zorn good money whether or not his stuff gets used, and Zorn invests it in Tzadik. One of Zorn's friends, Kazunori Sugiyama, who co-produced the Masada CDs on the Japanese DIW label, runs the business side of the operation from his apartment, in SoHo. Zorn pays himself a nominal salary, and spends the rest of his earnings on production fees and artists' royalties.



Tzadik has also given Zorn the opportunity to write and record more classical music—an enterprise that most of his jazz and avant-garde fans know nothing about. Here, too, his recent pieces display a certain mellowing. Some of his earlier classical work, Zorn admits, revealed his cut-and-paste compositional methods all too clearly, so it sounded like someone cruising late-night cable with a jittery remote control. "Now I'm not looking for such stark juxtapositions anymore," Zorn told me. "I'm hearing things in a more subtle way." In such recent works as "Duras" and "Aporias: Requia for Piano and Orchestra," you can still sense the remote control clicking, but it's as if the images on the screen were adding up to a compelling movie in their own right.

Stephen Drury, who teaches classical piano at the New England Conservatory of Music, in Boston, has played and conducted several Zorn pieces, though he still hasn't figured out how Zorn binds all the fragments into whole compositions. Drury cites a 1992 piano piece called "Carny," in which a polyrhythmic phrase, in the style of the player-piano composer Conlon Nancarrow, is followed by the downward swipe of a D-major arpeggio, a sneaky cartoon passage of rising fourths, a punch of jazz, the opening chords of Charles Ives's "Thoreau," eight notes from Elliott Carter's "Night Fantasies," and four chords from Liszt's "Mazeppa." What might seem like a crazy hodgepodge has, as Drury puts it, "a flow which is both startling and poetic." He adds, "That's the miracle to me—the way one thing leads to another with inevitability. Every time you play it, you're shocked by it. You ask yourself, 'How could he have written it that way and made it sound so natural?' "

If there's not just intellectual intricacy but real emotional intensity in this smorgasbord, it's because Zorn—unlike many postmodern composers, who turn out eclectic music as if they were dryly commenting on the high and low culture around them—immerses himself in the whole schmear with such sincerity. "I don't play around with genres that I don't fully feel," Zorn told me. "All my music comes out of my life." Still, when the life is as culturally scattered as Zorn's, it may be inevitable that his music—however enjoyable, provocative, even stirring—sometimes stops short of the point it seems headed for. David Harrington, of Kronos, entertains similar thoughts. When I asked him to place Zorn in the scheme of things, he paused, then said, "What I'm hoping is that he'll have the time to assemble truly transcendent experiences. I know he's capable of doing it. He's got all the tools to do what so many other people only wish they could do."

Then again, I doubt that Zorn would want to deepen, say, his classical hooks if it meant trimming the others. He chooses to let a thousand Zorns bloom, even if some of them shrivel on the vine, because otherwise he wouldn't be Zorn.

And so, on a recent Tzadik CD, called "Music for Children," Zorn inserts, in the middle of a program of lyrical chamber compositions, a twenty-minute piece for three wind machines and electronic feedback, for no apparent reason other than to show that it can be done. And at Tonic, not long ago, he staged a John Zorn Improv Night, during which he merrily coaxed from his horn a menagerie of sounds that Adolfe Sax could never have imagined when he invented the instrument—sounds suggesting, perhaps, a monkey being strangled, a stick of dynamite exploding, a frenzied foghorn, the eerie cry of a ghost. The faithful, who packed the place, nodded knowingly. Others, new to the experience, glanced nervously around the room, as if to ask, "Is this supposed to be happening?" Zorn, rapt in the moment, howled on. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

RUNNING WILD

"The Red Violin" and "Instinct."

BY DAVID DENBY

As Joshua Bell's impassioned violin soars above a dark matting of strings, John Corigliano's score for "The Red Violin" gives more than a hint of ecstasy, abandon, and deep sorrow. The music may be the one inspired element to emerge from this grandiose French-Canadian movie. "The Red Violin," which was directed by François Girard, suffers from an awkward combination of vaunting pictorial ambition and feeble dramatic skills. In Cremona, in the late seventeenth century, the master instrument-maker Nicolo Bussotti (Carlo Cecchi) creates his greatest work, a perfect violin. The maestro has a pregnant young wife, Anna (Irene Grazioli), and he dedicates the instrument to the unborn child within her. These early scenes look like imitation Old Master paintings, but our curiosity is aroused by the attempted gravity of the style. Then Anna submits to a Tarot-card reading by the family nurse, Cesca (Anita Laurenzi), and gravity goes out the window. Cesca, who has the strong, ugly face of generations of premonitory movie peasants, announces the future: Adventure, suffering, death! A poisonous casket of *morbidezza*, she's like the spooky, morose Azucena from "Il Trovatore," and we are dismayed when the movie, with solemn persistence, keeps coming back to her and her cards. As you may have guessed, Cesca's prophecies reveal the fate not of Anna or of her child—although they do both die—but of the incomparable fiddle, which receives a mysterious red varnish and then embarks on a long, long career. We see extravagant episodes from that career set in eighteenth-century Austria, nineteenth-century England, and twentieth-century China. The movie, then, is a historical spectacle devoted to the secret life of a violin—a good idea, perhaps, though not in the hands of François Girard, who demonstrates that he is art conscious without being an artist.

In "The Red Violin," Girard has fallen into the troubles typical of the cranky and deservedly marginal form he has chosen: the omnibus film. "The Red Violin" is diffuse and whimsical. In place of a central narrative, Girard and his screenwriting collaborator, Don McKellar, have imposed a busy, overarticulated construction that distracts us with its many moving parts but adds up to very little. Along with the Tarot-card readings in Cremona and the three historical vignettes, they've concocted a present-day story meant to tie everything together. The violin goes on sale at a Montreal auction house, and representatives of all its previous owners show up and make bids on the instrument, while Samuel L. Jackson, as a canny rare-instruments specialist, develops his own plans for it. The trouble is that Girard and McKellar haven't sustained a coherent idea of what the violin means—an idea that would allow the auction to explode dramatically. We don't care who winds up with the instrument or why. The filmmakers are adding fancy syntax to empty thoughts.

All along, they have been stuffing each historical episode with attention-grabbing flourishes, mostly of the opera-buffa variety, and the flourishes cancel one another out. In the nineteenth-century English episode, the violin is in the hands of a Byronic aristocrat, one Frederick Pope (Jason Flemyng), who is tall, with a flowing mane: he's a famous soloist and an outrageous poseur, hetero variety. (Cesca tells us he's the Devil.) Lodged in an Oxford mansion, he furiously plays the violin and fornicates at the same time, which is quite a trick. It seems that the mere sound of the red violin arouses women to frenzies, and then the violinist, so to speak, finishes off the concerto. I suppose that Girard and McKellar are making some sort of metaphorical joke about the demonic and erotic powers inherent in virtuoso music-making, but the sequence comes off as gaudy nonsense. And I suppose that they are saying something about the angelic nature of childhood in the episode set in eighteenth-century Austria, in which the violin is played by a young orphan boy who is a musical prodigy. The bewigged child, an innocent perhaps ten years old, falls into the hands of an ambitious teacher, who hauls him before a haughty patron, with catastrophic results. Is the violin cursed? Blessed? Is it a glory? A menace? Or are its alleged powers just an excuse for large-scale costume pageantry? In a more sober vein, Girard stages a sequence set during the Cultural Revolution in China: a violin teacher who loves Western music, and who gets punished for it by the Red Guards, is nevertheless entrusted with the red violin by a female Party official, because she wants to save the instrument from the political flames. In this case, the violin serves as a symbol of resistance to orthodoxy—a little piece of soulful varnished wood holding out against the rages of organized philistinism. But this touching story has a completely different style from the first two.

Girard may simply lack the temperament for sustained narrative construction. (He earlier made "Thirty-two Short Films About Glenn Gould," which consisted of a compilation of riffs on the pianist.) Long before "The Red Violin" was over, I had decided that the actual subject of the picture was nothing more than its own overcomplicated architecture. "The Red Violin" isn't boring, but it's exhausting and pointless, and Girard can't seem to get hold of the right tone. He veers back and forth between humorless piety and flamboyant clownishness. Is a new Ken Russell about to be born? I'm not sure we need one. Russell, who had his way with Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Gaudier-Brzeska, and a variety of other high-culture figures, was forever mixing art worship with a satire of it, as if he feared being ridiculed for loving the art that presumably inspired him to make his movies in the first place. Girard may be falling into the same self-annihilating style. It's not a good sign.

"SOMEWHERE in the universe, there has to be something better than man," Charlton Heston said before he met the furry superior creatures in "Planet of the Apes." Anthony Hopkins comes to the same conclusion in "Instinct." Hopkins plays an anthropologist, Dr. Ethan Powell, who lives with the mountain gorillas of Rwanda, accepted by them as a fellow-creature. Though he appears to be content, some of us might wonder what two years of hunching, grooming, and scratching in the forest without a subscription to *The New York Review of Books* or *Penthouse* and a decent reading light might do to a man's soul. In time, Hopkins does go ape and murders a couple of people, but only in defense of his new animal family. Some years later he recalls these events while he's incarcerated in a Florida prison ward for the criminally insane—a real snake pit, from which a hot-shot young psychiatrist, played by Cuba Gooding, Jr., attempts to rescue him. But first Gooding has to get him to speak, and Hopkins, his head down and his white hair falling on his shoulders, refuses to do anything except stare balefully at people, and then attack them with sudden viciousness. He's sneaky and abrupt, more guerrilla than gorilla, though he certainly has a wild beast's strength, taking down men twice his size and half his age. No one can accuse Sir Anthony, who's now in his sixties, of settling into respectability. If he gets any more crazily virile, he'll join the World Wrestling Federation and do his act on late-night cable.

Samuel L. Jackson plays a canny rare-instruments expert in "The Red Violin."

Hannibal Lecter, another of Hopkins' violent creations, had moments of ghoulish wit, but Dr. Powell, once he decides to stop fighting and talk, is high-minded, rueful, wounded. He thinks that civilization is a disaster and that man was much better off when he hunted merely to avoid starvation rather than to conquer or to make himself wealthy. "Dominion," he explains sagely, summing up in a single word the faults of advanced life. We are takers, therefore we are evil. It is the straight Rousseauian line, announced without irony or historical awareness, and some of us have heard it before, and rejected it before, though New Age guilt-trippers may find it enlightening. "Instinct," which was written by Gerald DiPego (from a novel by Daniel Quinn) and directed by Jon Turteltaub, preaches against violence and then seeks to entertain us with scenes of Hopkins bashing people. It also indulges in the kind of loony-bin garishness—brutal guards savaging pathetic, grotesque patients—that one had hoped might have dropped out of movies for good. "Instinct" is a whorish movie lusting after purity. Most of it takes place in the prison and consists of endless soulful confrontations between Hopkins and Gooding. After a while, one longs for a glimpse of this superior nature we've been hearing so much about, but the mountain scenes are disappointingly brief, and the gorillas (played by men in suits) are far too tame. The most pleasurable thing in the movie is the performance of Cuba Gooding, Jr., whose qualities of ardency, alertness, and charm can be taken only as the products of a very considerable civilization and are therefore a refutation of everything that the movie is trying to say. ♦

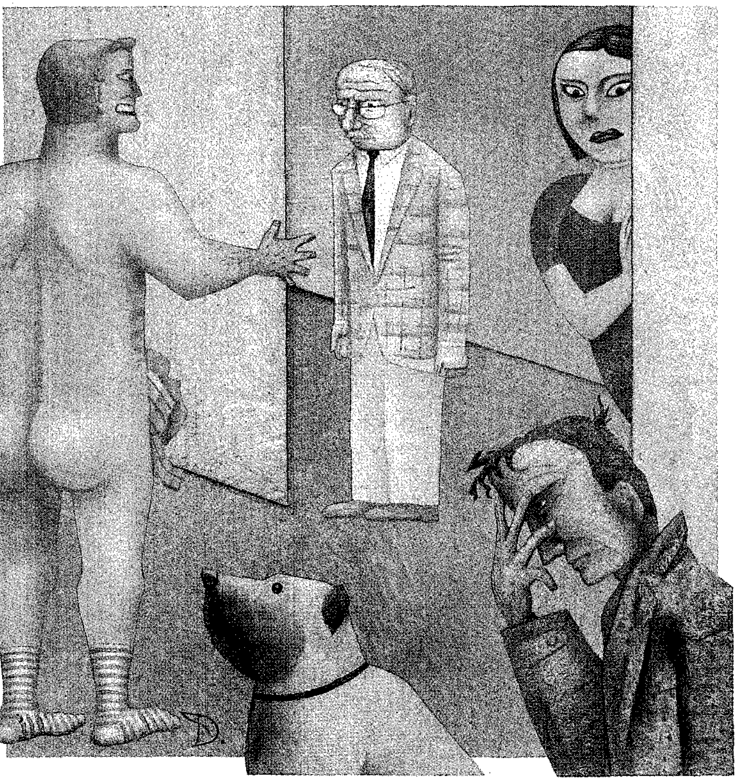
THE THEATRE

WHAT PRICE HAPPINESS?

Money and its side effects.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

The tone of much of Richard Greenberg's new comedy, "Hurrah at Last," a production of the Roundabout at the Gramercy Theatre, is nicely summed up in one of the play's own stage directions: when the main character's father walks into a room and greets his son, Laurie (Peter Frechette), he is called upon to deliver his words with "mock hostility masking real hostility." We expect to be in the presence of hostility—and its more outgoing twin, rage—if we're at a Greenberg play, and in this case the setting virtually promises them even before the play begins. The set is a tastefully decorated, clearly expensive New York City loft, with an enormous window, sky-high columns, Mission-y furniture, and attractive paintings, and it's practically a dramaturgical rule of thumb that the more tasteful the setting, the more likely it is that seething hostility will come knocking. And it's Christmastime (corny holiday songs sung by the likes of Louis Armstrong and Kay Starr are played in the theatre before the show), a fact that is almost too deliciously Greenbergian; odds are that at least one of the characters will wittily pick away at any ambient holiday cheer and complacency as obsessively and urgently as if it were an annoying scab covering a bright, shining wound.



Paul Michael Valley, Larry Keith, Ileen Getz, Peter Frechette, and Dreyfus, in Richard Greenberg's "Hurrah at Last."

Appropriately, given the time of year, the subject is money. "Hurrah at Last" begins with Laurie, a novelist, complaining to his sister Thea (Ileen Getz), whose loft they're in—a Christmas party that Thea has planned is about to begin—that he doesn't have any. He then corrects himself: "No, no, I mean—I live from tiny windfall to tiny windfall—and I have the good fortune to be related to some people who, if I don't say anything too truthful, will see me through." But he *is* preoccupied with it; when Thea tells him that she and her husband, Eamon (Kevin O'Rourke), have failed in their latest attempt at in-vitro fertilization, he says, "Oh, God, that's so expensive, I mean, heartbreaking." He tries to get Thea to disclose just how much money she and Eamon have, and he speculates more or less idly that his friend Oliver, a tremendously successful playwright who has been hired to adapt Laurie's latest novel, would sooner show Laurie his penis than tell him his net worth. It's not much of a surprise when, later in the first act, Oliver (Paul Michael Valley) meets Laurie's expectations to the letter. (The audience, for a change—praise the Lord and David Warren, the director—is privy only to the actor's hindquarters.) Oliver asks him what he thinks of his willingness to take this test of friendship, and Laurie, after looking Oliver up and down, replies, "How much are they paying you to adapt my book?" This scene also contains an exchange that should by rights become as famous as certain Woody Allen lines: when the fatuously sincere Oliver tells Laurie that money doesn't buy happiness, Laurie responds, "But it upgrades despair so beautifully."

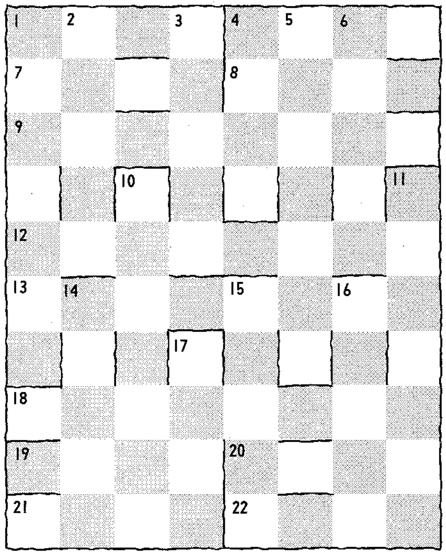
It is hard to know what to make of Laurie's obsession; Greenberg has often written interestingly on the side effects of having, wanting, and getting money, but here his intentions seem both more ambiguous and simpler than usual. As the play begins, Laurie has a terrible cold, and he keeps his coat on throughout the first act. Frechette glistens with clammy dampness, his hair sticking to his forehead, and he passes out at the kitchen table a couple of times—so how can we tell if his rantings are genuine insights about what's important in life or just fever-driven snit fits? Or is the entire play merely an elaboration of the late-seventies William Hamilton cartoon caption "Money is life's report card"? It may be that the answer is neither here nor there; in an interview last year in the Los Angeles *Times*, Greenberg said that the writing of "Hurrah at Last"—he finished a first draft in five days—was to some extent an exercise: "I wrote so quickly because the coffer was empty. Then I decided that I wanted the speed of the composition to become an aesthetic property of the play.... You're always looking for ways to get free. Speed is one of the ways to do it." Speed is an essential component of farce, of course, but Greenberg never quite delivers on the play's farcical promise. There's an irrelevant offstage relationship between an old friend of Eamon's and Eamon's teenage daughter from an earlier marriage. And a real live mastiff—a dog as big as a night-club bouncer—comes onstage, for no good reason. When he is led away to other, unseen rooms in the loft, we're told that he has eaten an end table and broken some glass sculptures, and no one bats an eye. Well, they all bat an eye, but nobody does anything about it. "Hurrah at Last" may have been written with speed, but the characters seem to be taking a slow cruise to nowhere.

In the second act, the ship runs aground. Laurie, having collapsed at the party, is now confined to a hospital bed. The doctors have ruled out AIDS (Laurie is gay; as he says to his mother at one point, "I'm the only *boy* who was ever named after a character in 'Little Women,' what did you expect?"), but they don't know what's wrong with him. Greenberg, who had Hodgkin's disease at the beginning of this decade, when he was in his early thirties, knows from hospitals; and he has put Laurie through the same paces he went through—the spells of "waxing and waning consciousness." Illness is, alas, all too interesting—if you're in doubt about that, go see "Wit"—but Greenberg doesn't really take us into the depths of Laurie's experience. His delusions seem generic: in his encounters with family members and with Oliver, he imagines them to be doing the opposite of what they would be likely to do in real life (Eamon tells him he has given away all his money; his father, a man of few words, sits beside his bed and opens up to him) or to be much worse than he had previously thought (which is quite an accomplishment, since even before his illness he had a severely jaundiced eye). A remark that Laurie makes to Oliver about what it's like to be in the hospital describes rather too well the overall effect of "Hurrah at Last": "There's this general feeling of profundity but it never turns into anything specifically interesting."

Greenberg's previous play, "Three Days of Rain," which was produced at the Manhattan Theatre Club a year and a half ago, was a haunting, enduring piece of work; its psychological texture was both fibrous and delicate, like the human heart. "Hurrah at Last," on the other hand, has a big dog and a lot of Jewish-mother jokes. I compare the two mainly to say that comparison is largely beside the point: Greenberg is a working playwright, and it's actually good to know that a play that amounts to an experiment has been given as loving a production as something more obviously worthy would have received—that's the only way anyone ever gets to *be* a working playwright. And Greenberg is one of the funniest playwrights of his generation; even in his half-baked plays, there's a lot to chew on. ♦

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 92 BY TRIP PAYNE



ACROSS

1 Rogue finally cancelled con game (4)
4 Transported in colorful paper to the auditor (4)
7 Zero talk about victory for Holyfield (4)
8 Burden on you and me (4)
9 Examine succeeding Asian river trade (8)
12 Curse song about a certain note (8)
13 Despot gets around North Dakota hazard (4,4)
18 Ram and horse getting depressed (4,4)
19 Drag Arsenio by the ear (4)
20 One of Pop's partners gives a bad review to retrospective (4)
21 That man's having true successes (4)
22 Smears liberal arts (4)

DOWN

1 Quickly read question: "What might a bank robber wear?" (3,4)
2 Author's works soon going past copyright (5)
3 Generalissimo unthinkingly conceals horse (5)
4 Kind of wine came into existence (4)
5 Jerk is south of a N. European city (7)
6 Uriah's leadoff in proper Jewish festival (5)
10 Desire to leave pale tipster (4,3)
11 Notice friend returned computers (7)
14 Mr. Stevenson fiddled with a dial (5)
15 Pest takes in South Bend (5)
16 Pronouncedly change wedding location (5)
17 Birds head away from birds (4)

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The solution to puzzle No. 91 appears on page 24. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE BACK PAGE

BILL CLINTON arrived in the White House six and a half years ago a feckless amateur in the world of foreign affairs, hungry for a little learning. When it came to the crisis in Yugoslavia, the President found that learning in Robert D. Kaplan's best-seller, "Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History." In an elegantly fatalistic travelogue that relied heavily on a classic of fatalism—Rebecca West's "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon"—Kaplan portrayed a region in which eternal hatreds and immutable national characters are as vicious as they are permanent, a world in which battles of the fourteenth century are still waged at the end of the twentieth and will doubtless rage in the twenty-first. It was an essentialist account, a description of unchanging types and patterns. It also turned out to be a marvellous alibi for inaction. "Balkan Ghosts" made such a deep impression on the famously impressionable President that it led him to believe that large-scale American intervention was probably useless and doomed.

A great many things shifted Clinton's point of view: the appalling massacres at Srebrenica; the ultimate success of foreign intervention in Bosnia; the rise of a more assertive government in London. There was also, once more, a matter of the President's learning curve. (Here, as elsewhere, we endure the American Presidency as junior year abroad.) According to one White House adviser, Clinton now took up, among others, Noel Malcolm's book "Bosnia: A Short History," a volume that judged the recent disaster in that country to be the result not of irremediable blood hatreds but of the brutal political calculations of a thoroughly modern dictator—Slobodan Milosevic. Unlike Kaplan's book, Malcolm's "Bosnia" implicitly bolstered the argument for forceful action on the bases of moral principle and the likelihood of change.

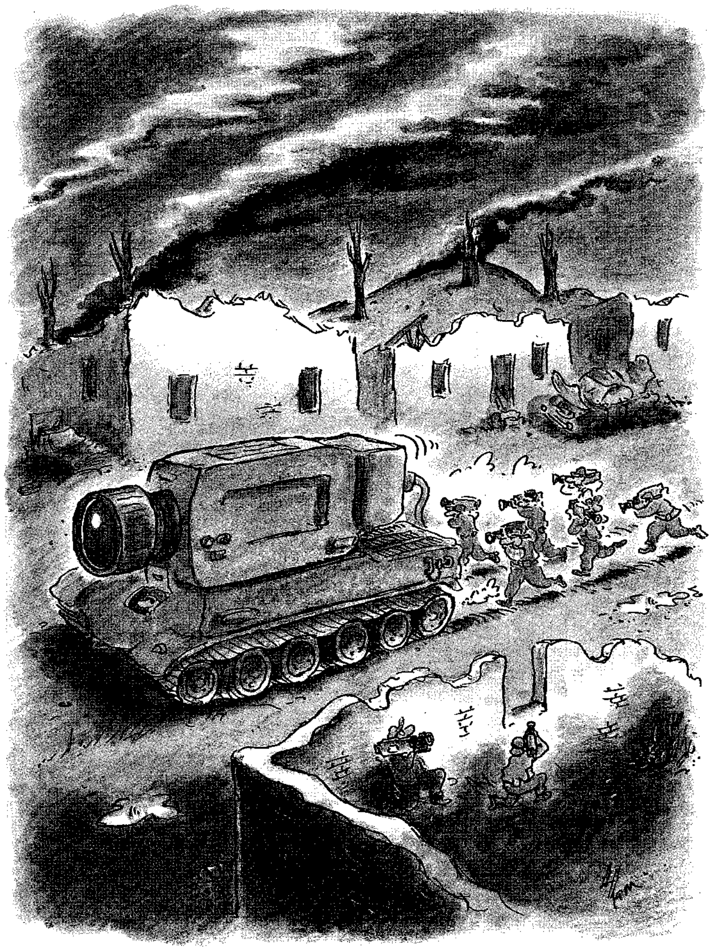
It was bad enough that all involved (especially the Bosnians and the Kosovars) had to wait patiently on the evolving education of the President. (Last week, in a speech at the Air Force Academy, Clinton finally conceded that it is "simply not true, as some have alleged," that the Yugoslavs are "genetically predisposed" to hatred and strife.) What was at least as amazing to witness was the cynical gestures of the President's opponents in Washington. Nearly all the leading congressional Republicans—John McCain being the most obvious exception—denounced NATO military action in Yugoslavia. If the impeachment proceedings did not quite expose the ideological emptiness of the Republican Party leaders, their behavior over Kosovo did. There was Tom DeLay leading the House fight against the conflict and branding it Clinton's war; there was Trent Lott echoing Jesse Jackson by way of John Lennon, asking plaintively for everyone to "give peace a chance." They didn't hate the war so much as they did the President; whatever was bad for him was good for the Party—and to hell with eight hundred and fifty thousand refugees.

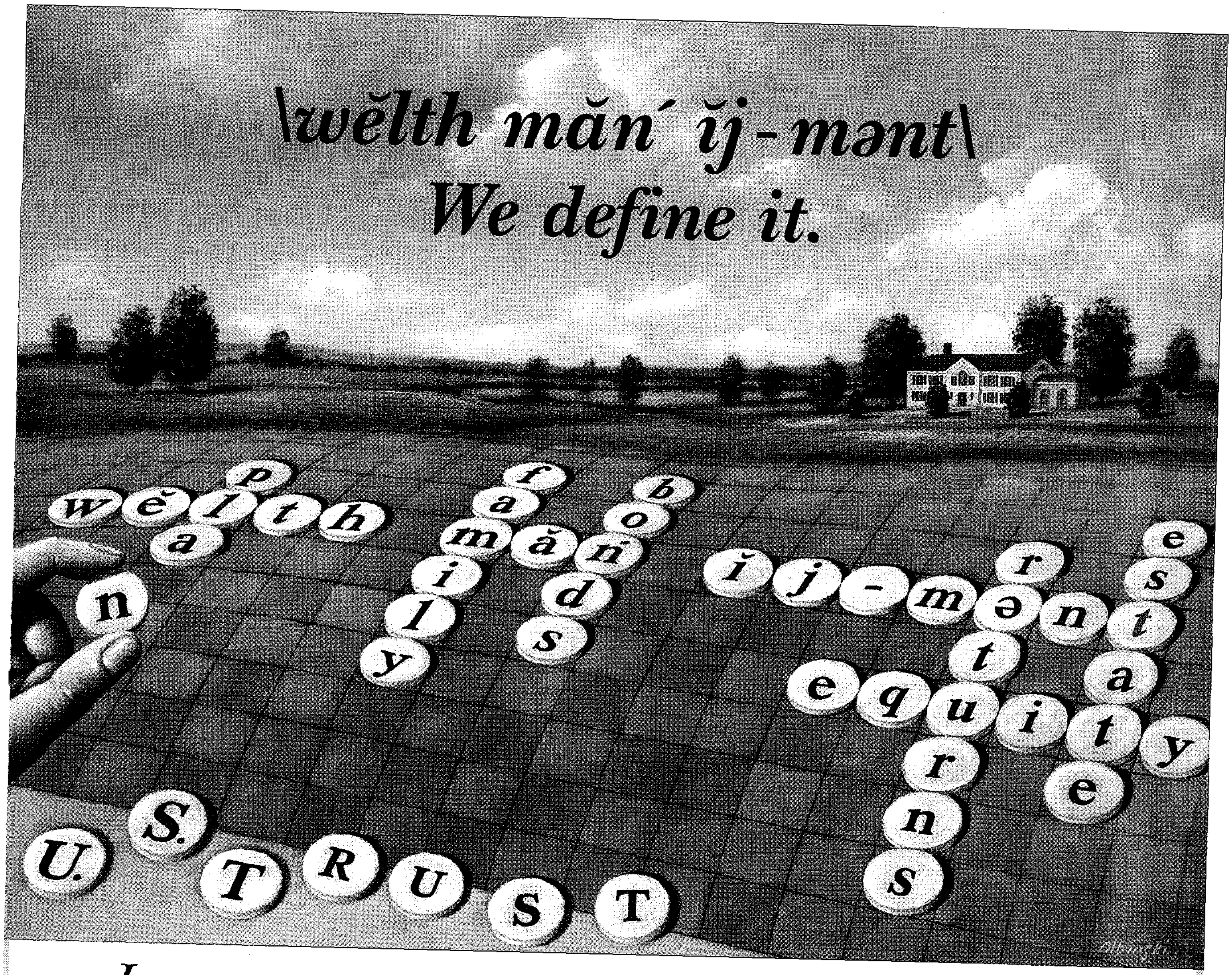
Even partisan observers noticed. "Some congressional Republicans look pretty silly," Bill Kristol, the editor of the conservative *Weekly Standard*, told the Washington *Post* last week as a fragile peace settlement was being announced.

The Republicans were not alone in the recklessness of their rhetoric. Recently, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, having helped bring down an evil empire and its ideology, gave an interview in Moscow, saying, "NATO wants to impose its order on the world. And Yugoslavia is needed as a terrible example: 'We'll punish Yugoslavia and the whole world will tremble.' " And that was not all. He also said that he saw no difference in the behavior of NATO and of Hitler.

There was much to criticize in Clinton's policy, from his early vacillations to the actual prosecution of the war. Moreover, this settlement, even if it holds, will not end the wider Balkan crisis. In the meantime, which of the critics will allow that a defense of human rights does, in fact, have a place in foreign policy, that morality is a national interest? This month, *The Atlantic* published a long "reconsideration" of the strategic thought of Henry Kissinger, who was critical of the war but supported it mainly to defend the standing of the NATO alliance. The author surveys Kissinger's scholarship, which features a Metternichian disdain for liberal humanism in foreign policy, and finds his argument "subtle, original, and, I believe, brave." The author is Robert Kaplan Clinton's former tutor in Balkan matters.

—DAVID REMNICK





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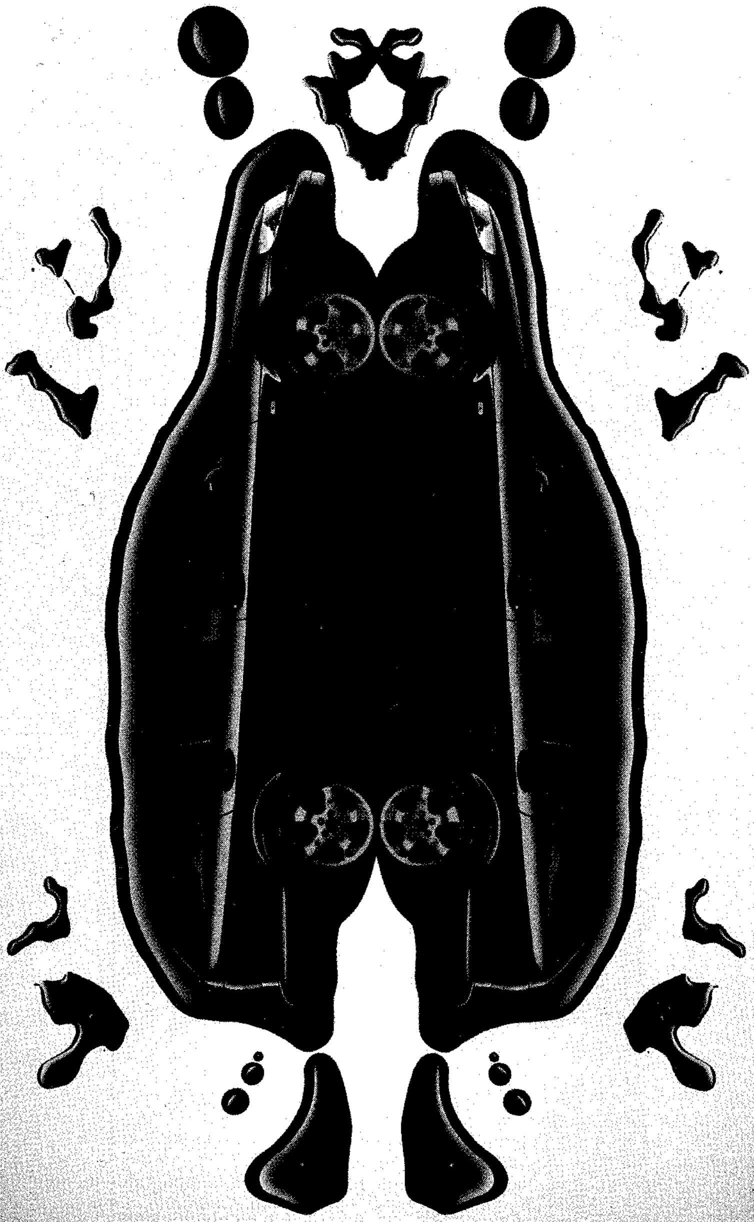

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Rorschach Test

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